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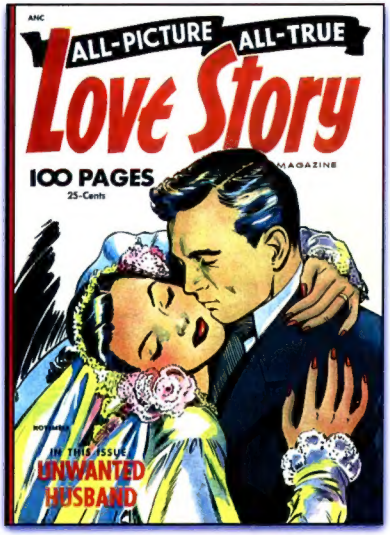

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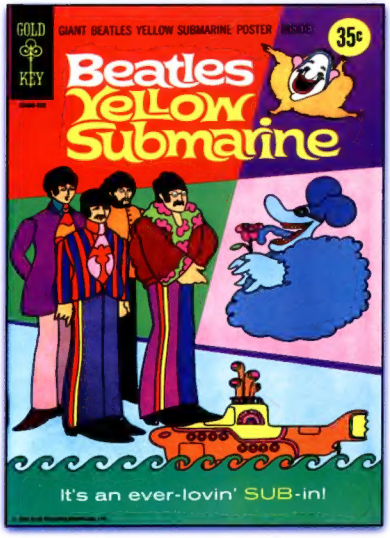

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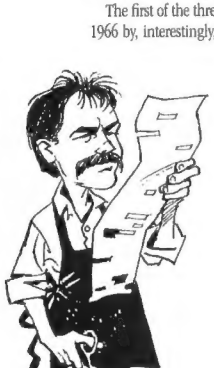
Horrible horror mags!

As a fan of Warren horror comics, I purchased more than my fair share when they were originally on the stands in the 1960s. But somehow three oddball "non-Warrens" ended up in my collection, too… low-budget horror magazines that, after three decades, are still curiosities I know little about. My hope in mentioning them here is that an astute and knowledgeable *CBM* reader might be able to provide some background, history, or other relevant info that could help me put these horrible horror mags into some kind of an understandable context.

The first of the three is *Weird*… and it really is weird. It's a title first published in early 1966 by, interestingly, Eerie Publications. The issue that I have (V2#1, December 1966) amazingly appears to contain B&W reprints of pre-Code horror comics! But what really makes the mag interesting to me is the fact that it was published by Robert W. Farrell, of Farrell comics fame, and edited by none other than the legendary Carl Burgos! Apparently, the title only lasted three years, ending its run in 1968. Earlier, I had the misconception that Farrell had stopped publishing before '68.

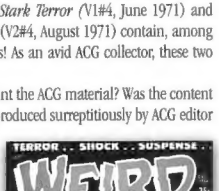


Also, the cover of the *Weird* issue that I own boldly states "Told in new chilling picto-fiction," a phrase obviously lifted from EC's pioneering experiment with horror magazines a decade before. (EC's short-lived magazines set a literary standard for the format that, in my opinion, has yet to be equaled.)

So what is the background of Eerie Publications… and how did Farrell and Burgos get hooked up, especially that late in horror comics history? Were the contents all reprints or was there original material written and drawn for the title? And what original comics was the reprint material drawn from? These are just of few of the *Weird* questions I'd like to know the answers to!

My second and third entries are also real puzzlers. Published by Stanley Publications, *Stark Terror* (V1#4, June 1971) and *Chilling Tales of Horror* (V2#4, August 1971) contain, among other miscellany, reprints from pre-Code ACG books! As an avid ACG collector, these two really have me scratching my head.

Did Stanley Publications have permission to reprint the ACG material? Was the content in the public domain… or were the titles perhaps produced surreptitiously by ACG editor Hughes himself, four years after the demise of his own company? The stories and interior art seem totally out of sync with the early 1970s, and many of the staff names in the table of contents sound like pseudonyms (e.g. Theodore S. Hecht, Hella Morte, etc.), similar to the many made-up staff names Hughes used during the 1960s to enhance the pages of *Adventures Into the Unknown*, *Forbidden Worlds* and *Unknown Worlds*.



Stark Terror and *Chilling Tales of Horror* have one other odd element… their cover art. Both feature covers that are—to say the least—primitive, lurid, and reminiscent of the work used in and on some *(Continued on page 69)*

COMIC BOOK MARKETPLACE

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Gary M.Carter

ART DIRECTOR
Lisa M.Carter

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Pat S. Calhoun

MARKET REPORT COORDINATOR
Michael Naiman

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
Scotty Moore • Phil Barnhart

COPY EDITORS
Lee de Broff • Beth Holley

OFFICE & SUBSCRIPTION MANAGER
Amanda Kitzmiller

RESEARCH CONSULTANTS
Joe McGuckin • Mike Wilbur

MAGAZINE CONSULTANTS
Joe Sikoryak • Bill Howard

TECHNICAL CONSULTANTS
Mark Haynes • Arnie Sawyer

MARKETING DIRECTOR
J. C. Vaughn

E-MAIL ADDRESS
cbm@gemstonepub.com

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS AND ARTISTS
Murphy Anderson • Mark Arnold • Stephen Barrington • Alan Bartholomew • Dave Blanchard • Christian Blees • Bob Brodsky • Mark Burbey • Quinton Clem • John Clements • John Coates • Steve Cooper • Mike Curtis • John DeMocko • Tony Didio • Duane Dimock • Rich Donnelly • John Fallon • Creig Flessel • Fabio Gadducci • Catherine Garnier • Jeff Gelb • Stephen Gentner • Rolf Gerdau • Tony Gleeson • Dave Grisez • Jim Hambrick • Shawn Hamilton • Kevin Hanley • Tracey Heft • Roger Hill • Terry Hoknes • Jim Kealy • Douglas R. Kelly • Chris Knowles • Patrick Kochanek • David Krell • Mark Magarity • Sam Maronie • Jon McClure • Lou Mougin • Will Murray • Matt Nelson • Michelle Nolan • Myls Putnam • Gene Reed • Arlen Schumer • David W. Smith • Tony Starks • Mirko Tavosanis • Roy Thomas • Eric Vignolles • Mark Voger • Murray R. Ward • Paul Wardle • Lynn Woolley • Nicky Wright

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Ashcan Action

Thank you for Gary Colabuono's cover story on ashcan comics. When I've spoken with Gary he has always been very generous with his time and his knowledge, and he deserves special thanks for preserving and researching an important chapter in the history of comic books. I had to smile when Gary noted the "haggling and badgering" he endured in order to get the All-Star Comics ashcan, as I went through the same ordeal trying to buy the book from the very same collector.

In 1992 I had the pleasure of showing my copy of the Action Comics ashcan to its cover artist, Creig Flessel. Creig immediately recognized the artwork, but he was quite surprised to see it in print with the Action Comics logo!

Creig's drawing, an image befitting the horror comics of the 1950s, was actually intended to be the cover for Detective Comics #2. However, in 1937 Creig was told that the image was unsuitable for publication.

"I guess it was just too avant-garde for them at the time," Creig told me with a smile. As it turned out, he was never informed that his artwork was used to secure the trademark to Action Comics. So, 55 years later, it was interesting to watch the reunion of a man and his artwork. I gave Creig a copy of the ashcan cover and he seemed genuinely pleased to discover out that his artwork had graced the actual first issue of the comic book title that introduced Superman to the world, forever altering the course of comic book history.

Mark N. Miller, M.D., Oregon

Letter from Rotterdam

A Batman story printed in Dutch, my native language, caught my eye, as it is unusual to see such translations. Curious about its original publication, I did some research which revealed that it was originally from Detective Comics #165 (12/50) and titled "The Strange Costumes of Batman." The story involves a crook named Dr. Robert Darcy, and may have been chosen for translation because it has been reprinted several times, including in Batman Annual #1 (10/61), Batman #259 (12/74), and most recently in Giant Batman Annual Facsimile #1 (6/99).

J.G. van Leeuwen, Rotterdam, Netherlands

Grade the dealers!

I'm surprised at all the controversy over grading. Very Good to Fine is like an oxymoron to me. Fine is shiny, Very Good is not. Sports cards are even more confusing. Ex-Mint is rated 6 and Near Mint is a 7. Why use the word "Mint" in the lesser grade? And Gem Mint or Pristine Mint are superfluous terms—we don't say "very perfect" for perfect!

I think that we should grade the dealers. Only patient, honest, friendly and knowledgeable dealers should be patronized!

Richard M. Brown, Michigan

Easy to get, and cheap!

Just read Tony Neves' letter in CBM #71 and I want to pass along this info. I don't know about its real scarcity, but all he has to do is look on eBay (ohh, the scary "E" word!) for a copy of Heroes Inc. Presents Cannon #1. I have seen approximately 10-15 individual copies of the Heroes Inc. Presents Cannon #1 for sale in the past month or two, and one guy had an auction up that sold 20 copies at once!

I have also talked to an eBayer who went to San Diego, where a dealer was selling copies for $4 apiece, although many were printed badly and had a large ink streak on the last page. BTW, I have never seen a #2 for sale on eBay, but I haven't been looking very hard for that one. Let Tony know that they are easy to get, and cheap! My total cost for the VF copy + shipping was $4.75!

Stu Cathell, via E-mail

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How about another

Wow! is all I can say about CBM #71. You guys even made the cover look like an ashcan! I loved it… kudos to your art director! Now how about another Gary Colabuono article on the achcans of other publishing companies? Issue #71 was one of my all-time favorites!

Les Nebauer, New Jersey

Letter from Brasilia

This is the first time I've written to you. I am from Brazil and I like your magazine very much. I get your magazine directly from Bud Plant Comic Art. I especially liked #47 because of the Russ Heath interview. I've appreciated Heath's artwork for many years… ever since I first saw his art in Brazilian comic books.

Another artist's work I enjoy is Joe Kubert's… I have some of his work in my collection. Did you know that Joe Kubert is illustrating a Tex story for Sergio Bonelli Editore here? I'm anxious to see it published.

I'm looking for some old publications that are out of print. If you know anything about them, please get in touch with me. Xerox copies are welcome, too. My list includes The Art of John Buscema; The Conan Portfolio by John Buscema from the '70s; The Comics Journal #76 (Berni Wrightson); The Comics Interview #42 (Frank Frazetta); The Comics Journal #174 (Frank Frazetta); The Comics Journal #167 (Burne Hogarth); The Boris Vallejo Calendar 1978, with 12 Tarzan paintings; Nexus #28 by Mike Baron and Mike Mignola; Nexus #29 by Rick Veitch and Jose Luis Garcia-Lopez; Chronicles of Corum by Mike Baron and Mike Mignola; and finally, The Punisher War Zone #34 (Marvel Comics) by Joe Kubert, part four of River of Blood.

You can send me a fax message at (061) 415-4059-DMI-A/C Joao de Deus F. Araujo.

Keep up the good work.

Joao de Deus F. Araujo, Brasilia, Brazil

Bleaching out all color

Great cover on CBM #71, Lisa! By zooming in on Joe Shuster's bold line and bleaching out all color but the headline, you presented a real eye catcher. Congrats.

Chuck Brouillette, New York

Pulps and comics

Having been a comic book collector since 1979, like many comic fans I am now tuning into the pulp collecting aspect of this fine hobby. The two formats seem to go hand in hand and it's fantastic that you are giving the readers of CBM much needed information about pulp collecting.

Keep up the fabulous job that you all do. Issue #71 was fantastic! I do agree with one of your last letter writers that you really should include more post-1960 Marvel articles. After all that was "The Marvel Age of Comics."

All the best, from friend, fan, and fellow comic nut.

Peter Salamone, via E-mail

Original art please

Just picked up the September issue today and I was pleasantly surprised at the contents. Your magazine has always appealed to me and I've been with you since #2 of the first series but the last year's worth haven't really done it for me. However, this month's more than made up for that. I felt right at home.

Ah, simply scrumptious—so much so, that I devoured it from cover to cover without a break! My favorites pieces were "Lamont Larson Update!," "Absolutely Amazing DC Ashcans!," "The Bronze Age Implosion!," and "Nolan's Notebook."

With regard to September's "Notebook," I have been a longtime customer of Bud Plant's. I can certainly back up Michelle's glowing report about Bud. He and his staff are very professional and are always willing to go the extra step to help. I haven't taken the opportunity to buy from Jim Vadeboncoeur yet, but I will, soon!

Okay, it's suggestion time. About two years ago, I changed my hobby focus from collecting comics to collecting original comic art. Based upon the sudden surge in prices since I started buying, I'm not the only one who's crossed over.

Might there be a chance for an original art series or, even better, an ongoing column? With all due respect to other publications, and I love them for what they are, reading them is like taking an art appreciation course in college—a great introduction, but where's the meat? I don't want to just read interviews with artists. What I'm really looking for is a Pat Calhoun-style column which would, every month, examine fresh aspects of the original art market, not just a cold listing of prices realized or further pros/cons of eBay auction activity.

Remember that without the artists all of our favorite comics would have been books!

On a final note, I wish all involved with the monthly publication of CBM the very best professionally and personally. While not every topic is

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Some Back Issues are still available...

#44 Wally Wood, Amaz. Fantasy #16
#46 Atomic Genre, Pre-Code Horror, etc.
#47 Russ Heath, World of DC War
#48 Nick Cardy, Shuster, National Comics
#52 Archie, All-Star, Schwartz Part III, Fox
#55 Superman vs. Big Red Cheese, Skywald Horror, Fawcett's Nickel
#56 Denny O'Neil, Adams and Shadow
#57 Legion of Super-Heroes, Curt Swan
#63 Celebrating Superman's 60th!
#65 Pre-Code Crime, Bob Kane, & more!
#66 Women of the Spirit, Batman & Raven!
#67 Spidey & Stan, Gwen Stacy, Synchronic Collector (alt cover only)
#68 Planet of the Apes, Chuck Cuidera, Doug Moench, Les Fields (alt cvr only)
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of particular interest to me, the overall effort is magnificent and unmatched in the industry. Please keep it up!

Michael Hranek, via E-mail

Couldn't stop laughing

It's wonderful that Gary and a handful of others have been able to attend all the Cons in San Diego over the past 30 years!

Believe it or not, the first New York Con was held in1964, six years before the San Diego Con! I had a program from that historic Con which I bought from Alan Bahr for $65 and sold to a customer of mine for $250. The print run on that historic Con program was only 150 copies, and now I wish I hadn't sold it. An Action #1 sold for $65 at that New York Con and today I would say it's worth a tad bit more!

One thing that is seldom talked about in the comic hobby is how much grading has changed from the 1960s through the 1990s. Why, it wasn't until 1977 that Overstreet introduced us to the VF grade for the first time! Probably 90% of all comics that were graded NM by '60's and '70's standards back then were no better than FN by today's grading standards!

I consider the art of grading to be the most constantly changing part of the comic book hobby. I looked at the spreads on Action#1 in the 1972 Overstreet Guide for GD and MINT and couldn't stop laughing. It was $450 in Mint and $350 in GD, only a $100 difference.

Bill Alexander, California

The only place to go

Just got my hands on the September issue of CBM (#71) and started with your editorial and the letter column. It's the only place to go when I want to get into the right mind-set to read your magazine... the voice of Gary Carter and the voices of your readers.

One of the readers who wrote in—Tony Neves—had a question about the "Heroes Inc. present Cannon One Shot Comic" I happen to have a copy of the issue that Tony Neves is writing about and I was able to purchase from the Bud Plant Comic Art catalogue (Tel: 1-800-242-6642) over 18 months ago. If Tony calls they will tell him if they have any in stock. The price was very reasonable.

About two weeks ago, I went on-line to the Bud Plant Illust. Books web page to look over some of the wonderful items that Jim Vadeboncoeur, Jr. has for sale. Accidentally, I came across the Heroes Inc. Cannon issues #1 and 2. Those two issues might have been in magazine format or it might have just been issue #2. Tony could call Jim at 650-493-1191 to see if these items are available. I trust this information will assist Tony in his quest.

Personally, I can hardly wait for the Special Collectors Edition with the CBM index for issues through #75. It should be very fun. Your publication certainly helps maintain the wonder of comics, no matter what age we are. Thanks again and keep up the good work.

Dennis A. Brennan, New York

Horror-Go-Round for my wife

Hi. I was visiting your site about horror comics and looking for a specific older one, and was hoping your esteemed and knowledgeable readers might be able to help.

My wife is always talking about a comic book she read when she was a young girl. She was born in 1947, so I'm guessing that the comic was from the 1950s. It was a scary one about a merry-go-round or perhaps a carousel where the animals came to life as monsters. The comic may have had a name that was something like "Horror-Go-Round" or "Nightmare-Go-Round."

Do CBM readers know an issue that might match this description? If they could help me identify the issue I would be interested in getting a copy as a surprise for my wife.

Thank you, in advance, for your time.

Lynn Russell, via E-mail

Net rumors

Recently read the following on the Internet. Can any CBMers substantiate this? Mike Burkey wrote: "I told the list I would share a few INTERESTING things John Romita mentioned to me in San Diego this year! And I must say that I find this pretty INCREDIBLE and it will be some GREAT talk for a while on OUR COMICART-L list!

John Romita told me that DC comic sales were doing badly in the 1970s that Stan Lee and DC higher-ups got together, and DC was going to SELL MARVEL the rights to EVERY SUPERHERO they owned the rights to... EXCEPT Batman and Superman!!

Stan Lee was almost going to do it, but he wanted to have at least one of the two put into the mix to make a done deal!

Well, obviously, DC comics refused to sell

Superman or Batman to Marvel, so the deal was OFF! But John Romita told me it was VERY close to happening!

The deal would have been positive and negative in that it would have set up a lot of interesting storylines, but negative in that it is not good to have one company monopolizing a particular industry.

What does everybody else think about this?

With all the fan media/press over the past 20+ years, I can't imagine how such a story was ever missed.

John Coates, Georgia

Bat-wishes from Argentina

Thanks for the Adam West article by Stephen Barrington. We are the Adam West Squadron from Argentina and we have a website devoted to the Batman TV show (www.batmania.com.ar). We know that your magazine is well-known around the world and we want to be in touch with as many Batman fans as possible.

By the way, we would love to see an article about the old Mexican comics of Editorial Novaro. Those comic were very important for all people who speak Spanish. Thanks so much and bat-wishes!

Walter Armada & Martin Zamorano, Argentina

Feature Stories Mag. #4?

Way, way back in the October, 1997 issue of CBM, Michelle Nolan's excellent column questioned the existence of Feature Stories Magazine #4 from Fox. The book has been listed in the Overstreet Guide but there is no description to go along with the listing. Also, the book is not pictured in the Gerber Guide.

The book was supposed to have been published, according to Nolan's checklist sidebar, in late 1950 to early 1951 when the publisher was apparently on hiatus.

Michelle's sidebar, which lists two other books as being questionable, asks "Can anyone come up with proof that any of these exist?" I believe I have a possible copy of Feature Stories Magazine #4 hidden inside another book.

Having only acquired Internet access recently, I went to the Bedrock Comics web page, saw Blazing Comics #5 from Rural Home Publishing and bought it.

When I opened it up to see what the insides looked like, I was surprised to find a Fox book inside the beautiful green cover. The indicia inside the front cover said the book was Blazing Comics #5, but the top of the first page of the inside comic said "Feature Stories Magazine." The title of the story is "The Iroquois Trail."

None of the other Feature Stories Magazine listings in Overstreet have a description that matches the title of the book, so I began to look under other titles in the *(Continued on page 78)*

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Four-Color Trans-formations

By Pat S. Calhoun

A comic book based on a property from another medium always comes with some crossover audience appeal: novel adaptations attract fiction fans, movie adaptations draw film fans, and packagings of newspaper comic reprints interest fans of those strips. This practice was put to extensive use in the Atom Age (1945-1954), when comic books were still designed for the entire population—girls, boys, women, and men—and could achieve real results by such broad-based marketing. Also, these kinds of comics were often produced with a single story running from cover to cover and supplemental material on the inside and back covers. This is one of the best comic book formats.

A great movie adaptation need not start with a great movie. Leonard Maltin's film almanac describes 1951's "Mask of the Avenger" as "not up to snuff." But the version released as Fawcett's *Motion Picture Comics* #108 (January 1952) is excellent. The story—told against the background of an 1848 war between Italy and Austria—is a solid costume-hero epic of a determined young man who fights political treachery by disguising himself as the "ghost" of the legendary local hero, Monte Cristo. The military governor has sold out to the Austrians and taken over a key coast fort that guards the harbor. The only hope is for the masked avenger to rally the townspeople to storm the fort before the Austrian ships arrive.

It's familiar enough, and the art—although engaging—is not superb, but the whole package hangs together so well that the result is a totally satisfying comic book. The tale unfolds with perfect pacing and clear characters and takes a dramatic situation to an exciting climax. Done right and drawn well—as is the case here—is enough. Fawcett published two successful movie titles, but they were working their way out of the comics business to concentrate on Gold Medal, their even more lucrative line of paperback books.

One of the finest newspaper strips was Alex Raymond's Rip Kirby. Raymond had won fame as the king of high romantic fantasy with Flash Gordon, and in the post-War years he reinvented his style with a detective strip that combined detailed and realistic plots with detailed and realistic settings. In 1952 Harvey published a wonderful one-shot in their *Harvey Comics Hits* series (#57 July), "Rip Kirby Exposes the Kidnap Racket." The strip adventure is perfectly transformed into a 32-page comic book novel.

A childless woman with a wealthy husband buys a baby on the black market. But the child's real mother is devastated when she finds that the home where she left her son has been abandoned with no forwarding address. Fortunately, she happens to be a friend of a friend of Rip Kirby, and after telling her story to Madelon—the film star who was once fellow chorus girl Pagan Lee—the actress takes her to Rip and insists he take her case.

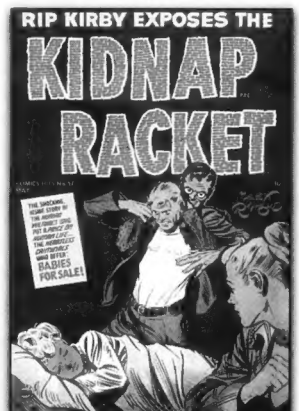
Thus begins a splendidly-crafted tale, with a cast of believably-motivated characters, rendered in a style that merges the harsh and the lush into a glorious spectrum. Even the wealthy barren woman is portrayed with sympathy; she has acted not wisely but understandably, and Kirby comes to realize this and contrives a humane solution to everyone's problems. The compelling and convincing narrative is fleshed out into a world of incredible richness and texture. Raymond's figure drawing still celebrates the human form—with an even greater variety and a matchless gift for revealing personality though image.

Flank the story with a handsome cast of characters in cameo portraits on the inside front cover and a bio/feature on Raymond and Kirby on the inside back, including a self-portrait of the artist, throw in a marvelous pin-up of Rip—gun-drawn—protecting his fabulous fiancée Honey Dorian from an offstage menace, on the back cover, and you end up with a terrific comic book.

Fast Fiction #3 (Aug 1949) adapted H. Rider Haggard's 19th-century fantastic romance novel, *She*. This is the story of a mysterious mountain kingdom hidden in the wilds of Africa, and its beautiful immortal queen who mystically summons a young Englishman, the descendant of her ancient lover. This translation captures all of Haggard's sense of wonder, and the art by Vincent Napoli is vivid and sensual. His Ayesha is a gorgeous combination of a black waterfall of hair, translucent skin and shapely form that glows from within. But the lovely queen is also a murderess and worse, and the Englishman cannot accept her.

The book builds to an opulent, tragic, supernatural finale, with Napoli's art peaking in the scene where the queen bathes naked in the fire that is the secret force which has allowed her to live for centuries.

This comic has 16 more pages than the previ-



Harvey Comics Hits #57 (Jul 1952) packaged a complete story from the Rip Kirby newspaper strip which resulted in one of the smoothest and most sophisticated comics of all time, with superlative narrative and visual character portraits

ous two books, having come out before the thinner size took over, but the novel takes up 46 of the 48 pages, and the fillers are relevant, including a half page bio of Haggard. The front and back covers are by the "man of 1000 adaptations," Henry C. Kiefer, and they are as sumptuous as Napoli's interior illustrations. *Fast Fiction*, published by Seaboard, morphed into *Stories By Famous Authors Illustrated*, which was eventually bought out by Gilberton, whose *Classics Illustrated* was threatened by the competition.

The "adaptation genre" produced a wealth of memorable and diverse comic books, especially during the Atom Age—the prime of the form when sales climbed to a billion a year, and the three examples discussed here show both how good four-color transformations could get and that graphic novels thrived in that august era.

A nicely composed photo cover helps Fawcett's Motion Picture Comics #108 (Jan 1952) entice readers with a charming poster for the "page-turner's theater," and the insides transform a lackluster film into an enthralling graphic novel

Fast Fiction #3 (Aug 1949) achieves its stated goal of paring an old classic down to pure high-speed adventure, and Vincent Napoli's art maximizes the erotic elements that lie at the heart of Haggard's novel

Christmas is coming early this year!

In honor of our upcoming 75th anniversary issue, our fearless leader and publisher, Steve Geppi, is celebrating by offering collectors full page b/w ads in CBM #75 for only $150 (if you predominantly list comic books for sale, prepay the ad, and send it camera-ready or on disk!). That's right (gulp), a $400 ad (choke) for only a hundred and fifty bucks (gasp)! This unbelievable offer is a one-issue, one-time deal... first come, first served! But please remember, there are only so many pages in an issue... so be smart, reserve your space now!

CBM Advertising (619) 437-1996

Matt Baker Discovery!

By Michelle Nolan

Unraveling one of the all-time comic book puzzlers!

Get ready CBM readers… because my mission this issue is two-fold: first to share what I believe to be a new Matt Baker discovery… then to provide a detailed report on just how difficult it can be find any given number of old comics, even at the biggest of all conventions… ComicCon International in San Diego. It was at that wonderful show that I had the rare pleasure of seeing a rare St. John romance cover by Matt Baker for the very first time… and I'm sure you'll agree that it's gorgeous!

At least I think it's an undiscovered Baker. Or is it? Perhaps someone else out there also has seen this issue—it's an unnumbered issue in the St. John Giant series. That series, consisting entirely of rebound comics in original covers, was produced primarily in 1949 and 1950.

Dan Stevenson, the noted Southern California indexer and collector, recently uncovered this giant St. John romance gem and shared the discovery with me in San Diego. It's the second time Dan has discovered a previously unknown St. John romance comic. The first was the issue of a *Mighty Mouse* giant pictured on this page.

This St. John romance discovery entailed quite a bit of research. I checked my collection and found that the new discovery contains *Teen-Age Diary Secrets* #8 (February, 1950) plus two issues of *Mopsy*, including one with a late 1949 ownership statement meaning this issue of *Mopsy* is also one of the 1950 issues.

The *Overstreet Price Guide* lists two St. John romance giants that are not pictured in *Gerber*—#7 supposedly consisting of an early issue of *Teen-Age Romances* plus three *Mopsy* comics) and #13, supposedly similar to#15, which is simply entitled *Romances*. Gerber says #7 may not exist and lists #13 with a scarcity rating of 8, meaning fewer than 20 copies exist.

Gerber does show photos of the other three known romance giants—#9, *Romance and Confession Stories*, which rebounds only 1949 romance comics, #12, *Diary Secrets*, with the notorious Baker prostitute cover, and #15, *Romances*.

Dan Stevenson's discovery of this unnumbered *Diary Secrets* rebound giant does not seem to fit either with #7 or #13, especially since it is not numbered and I presume those two issues are numbered. And #7 supposedly came out in 1949, anyway, whereas this new discovery definitely came out in 1950 or later, since it includes the 1950 *Teen-Age Diary Secrets* #8.

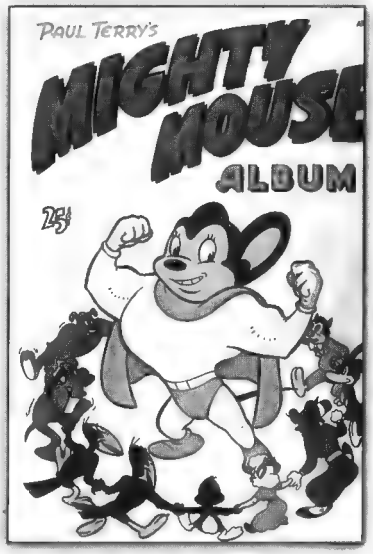
This previously undiscovered St. John romance giant's logo is also interesting, since the only previous use of such a "Diary Secrets" logo was on *Blue Ribbon Comics* #4 (June 1949). On that issue, however, the scripted words "Teen-Age" appeared above the logo.

By the way, and with no apologies for the pun, it took many years to uncover the secrets of *Diary Secrets*. This title has been one of the all-time comic book puzzlers!

The first three issues were published during the six-issue run of *Blue Ribbon Comics*. *Blue Ribbon* #1 (February, 1949) is actually *Heckle and Jeckle;* issue #2 (April, 1949) is entitled simply *Diary Secrets*; issue #3 (May, 1949) is *Heckle and Jeckle;* and issue #4 (June, 1949) is the aforementioned *Teen-Age Diary Secrets*, although it is just listed as *Diary Secrets-Blue Ribbon Comics* in the indicia. These first four issues are pictured in *Gerber*, but *Blue Ribbon* #5 (August, 1949) is not pictured—it's the third issue of *Teen-Age Diary Secrets*, with no number on the cover and features a lead story entitled "I Fell in Love With My Boss." *Blue Ribbon* #6, the last issue, is a Dinky Duck issue, also dated August, 1949, and is pictured in *Gerber*. Are you with me so far?

Now here's where it really gets weird. *Teen-Age Diary Secrets* officially picks up with #4 (September 1949), which like Timely's *Miss America Comics* of the period is oversized and is part comic, part magazine.

Teen-Age Diary Secrets #5 is the little-known unnumbered issue, which has no indicia anywhere in the comic but is cover-dated the "September Fashions Issue" and features the infamous photo cover-featured story by Baker, "I



This Mighty Mouse 25¢ squarebound giant published by St. John in the early 1950s contains re-bound issues wrapped in a new cover

Massively Rare Baker Book!

By Michael Browning

Romance comics are extremely popular commodities these days! Luckily, for romance fans like me, some of the most valuable older issues were the creations of Matt Baker, the famed Golden Age artist for Phantom Lady and other top-notch Good Girl comics. So when I came upon an auction offering a rare St. John romance comic done entirely by Baker, I knew I had to have it for my collection. Yet it was only after some thorough post-auction research that I fully appreciated the true rarity of the issue!

The flier ad for the auction, held through Lon Webb of Dark Adventure Comics, offered a romance rarity that I'd never heard of, *All-Picture All-True Love Stories* #2. The flier had a thumbnail picture of the comic, a handsome issue with a young bride and groom on the cover, and described it as "The only known copy of this book.... Massively rare." Well, that certainly caught my eye! I happen to specialize in collecting "Gerber 8 and above" issues. What collector could resist the thought of obtaining a "massively rare" book?

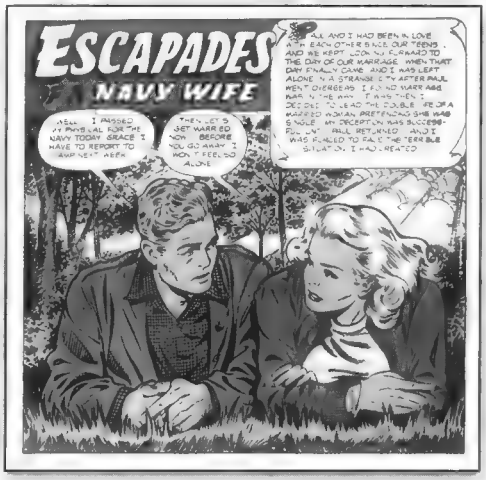
I'd located "tough" books before... *All-Negro Comics* #1 and the Rockford copy of *Captain Aero* Vol. 2 #9. However, the romance comic in the auction seemed extra-special: there was no photo or listing for it in Gerber, not even a blank space for a future *CBM* sticker (!), nor was there a listing of the comic in Overstreet.

Bidding for the comic, a 100-page collection of beautiful Baker-drawn women, opened at $20 and went straight through the roof, selling at the end of the phone auction for more than 11 times the opening bid. Whew! The winning bidder? Yours truly!

With a sale price at 11 times the opening bid, I'll admit to some initial buyer's regret. But that soon faded when I received the beautiful comic, did the appropriate research, and discovered that the copy was worth the price I paid and more!

The comic arrived and my research began. It was published in November, 1952 by St. John and was a squarebound, consisting of all-Baker reprints from *Wartime Romances*—the evidence being a circulation statement on one of the middle pages. And, just to cover all bases, Lon at Dark Adventure informed me that the comic's provenance was not mysterious. He'd simply bought if from the original owner, who had purchased it off the newsstand in 1952.

I dug out a dozen old *Overstreet Price Guides* and other books with photos of covers from the early romance comics period, thinking that surely I'd find a photo, or at least a mention somewhere. Nothing turned up, though, and it became frustrating.


ESCAPADES
NAVY WIFE
I PASSED MY PHYSICAL FOR THE NAVY TODAY GRACE I HAVE TO REPORT TO ANNAPOLIS NEXT WEEK
THEN LET'S GET MARRIED NOW BEFORE YOU GO AWAY I WON'T FEEL SO ALONE
ALL AND I HAD BEEN IN LOVE WITH EACH OTHER SINCE OUR TEENS - AND WE KEPT LOOKING FORWARD TO THE DAY OF OUR MARRIAGE WHEN THAT DAY FINALLY CAME AND I WAS LEFT ALONE IN A STRANGE CITY AFTER PAUL WENT OVERSEAS I FOUND WARTIME MARRIAGE THE HARD THING TO DECIDE TO MARRY THE DOUBLE LIFE OF A MARRIED WOMAN PRETENDING SHE WAS SINGLE MY DECEPTION WAS SUCCESSFUL PAUL RETURNED AND I WAS FACED TO FACE THE TERRIBLE SITUATION I HAD CREATED

Finally, I received significant help from Greg Miller, a Charleston, SC collector with a photographic memory, from Shaun Clancy in Seattle, and especially from Ron "Redbeard" Pussell in Nevada. It was Ron, in fact, a senior advisor to the *Price Guide*, who suggested that I contact none other than Bob Overstreet himself.

I called Overstreet and he was very kind, confirming what I had suspected: that he'd never seen the book before! "It's obviously an extremely rare issue," Overstreet said, "because it hasn't been documented in the *Guide* for 30 years." "And," he continued, "comics still undocumented are few and far between. The chances of finding a significant book, like this one, that isn't listed is very slim after so many years of careful research and documentation."

I asked how that could be possible. His response was that my find was probably one of less than a half-dozen copies out there.

Overstreet wondered if, by chance, the book was printed in Canada, but I checked and indicated that the indicia read "Printed in the U.S.A."

"A key piece of information is that the date in your comic is chronologically consistent with the first issue of that title," Overstreet said. "Also, the nicer St. John books have always been tough to locate and this issue appears to be one of the rarest."

My discussion with Bob Overstreet, and his acknowledgement of the book's existence, provided tremendous relief! In the months since that conversation, I've actually encountered one other collector, a fellow West Virginian, who owns another copy of my thrilling new find. If there are eventually a few more copies to go around, maybe one day *All-Picture All-True Love Stories* #2 will make the roster of the top Baker books of all time.

Meanwhile, I'd be interested to hear from other collectors like myself who specialize in finding Gerber 8s, 9s and 10s... or even Gerber "11s," the issues that Gerber and Overstreet never knew existed!

Michael Browning, a News Editor for The Logan Banner, *and a well-known West Virginia sports writer/photographer, avidly collects Golden Age and Atom Age comics.*

Gave Boys the Green Light." This issue is also oversized, but contains all comics.

Like *Blue Ribbon Comics* #5, neither of the September issues of *Teen-Age Diary Secrets* is either pictured or listed in *Gerber*.

"I Gave Boys the Green Light" actually has a Baker splash page showing a smiling blonde waiting next to a signal light. It doesn't come any weirder than this, folks!

Teen-Age Diary Secrets #6 (October 1949) returns to standard comic size. This is the first issue both listed and pictured in *Gerber*. Then with #7 (November, 1949), *Teen-Age Diary Secrets* becomes a digest-sized comic with original Baker stories before returning to standard size with #8 (February, 1950), the rebound issue.

Teen-Age Diary Secrets #9 (August, 1950) once again becomes a digest-sized comic, with a different photo cover than #7 but with the same contents. And that's the end of *Teen-Age Diary Secrets*, a temporary victim of the "Love Glut" of 1950. The next we see of this St. John comic, it has become *Diary Secrets* #10 (February, 1952), with a new logo and published regularly through the last issue, #30 (September, 1955).

Whew! It's dizzying!

At any rate, I believe Dan Stevenson deserves credit for discovering both the *Diary Secrets* and the *Mighty Mouse* rebound giants. Can anyone add further information?

Now, let's move on to shopping at the San Diego Con. I'd like to show you just how much patience it takes to be a comic collector—even a comic collector who has been collecting for more than four decades!

Like many of you, I prepare mentally for this huge show by making a "primary want list" of comics I'd especially like to find, in order to complete runs of titles, companies, or time periods. I memorize the list and make a mental commitment to buy these issues if I can find them in my favorite price range and condition, generally Good or Very Good.

Of course, there are always other comics of interest that pop up. Everyone loves the occasional impulse purchase! However, there is so much sensory overload at San Diego that it really helps to go in with a plan—even if you have a million dollars!

DIARY SECRETS
Intimate Confessions of Teen-Age Girls
25¢
HOW COULD DICK BRUSH ME OFF FOR HER -- AFTER ALL THE PLANS WE MADE? COULD HE HAVE HEARD ABOUT THE SCANDAL I WAS CAUGHT IN LAST SPRING? I'LL TELL HIM THE TRUTH — MAYBE HE'LL FORGIVE ME!

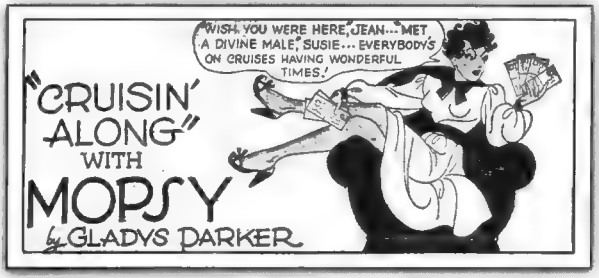
The newly discovered squarebound 25¢ St. John giant, Diary Secrets, features a stunning cover with the classic pre-Code headline "Intimate Confessions of Teen-Age Girls"

SEE INSIDE FRONT COVER FOR COLOR REPRODUCTIONS OF THESE COVERS

On my primary want list this year were 341 issues, all of them affordable—if I could find them! Over a two-day period, I covered every dealer offering Golden Age comics at the convention, then rechecked many of them over the last two days.

The vast majority of the comics I was seeking among those 341 primary wants were not especially hot, nor were they especially old, the oldest dated 1948.

So how many did I find? Exactly 61! How many others did I


"CRUISIN' ALONG" WITH MOPSY
by GLADYS PARKER
WISH YOU WERE HERE, JEAN... MET A DIVINE MALE, SUSIE... EVERYBODY'S ON CRUISES HAVING WONDERFUL TIMES!

Whether "Gladys Parker" was a real female author, or just a pseudonym for a male scribe, is still unknown... regardless, the strip "Mopsy" (like others from Diary Secrets) is filled with saucy poses that were a staple of Fox books

see at prices I either could not afford or I thought were too high? No more than 42!

Don't get me wrong—I was delighted to find and purchase 61 primary wants out of a list of 341! That represented nearly 20% of my primary wants. But it also shows just how difficult it can be to find old comics, even at an extravaganza as big as San Diego, the largest gathering of its type!

For that matter, I did not even see as many as one third of my primary wants at any price or in any condition! With the hundreds of thousands of comics for sale in San Diego, I'd be willing to bet that fewer than half of all issues ever published were brought to the show!

"I'll bet just about every comic book ever published is here!" was a comment I heard more than once. I know otherwise!

Granted, other collectors may have beaten me to a few of my precious 341 wants. But I doubt if that happened too often.

Here's how my primary want list broke down and how many I found for my collection:

Fawcett Captain Marvel and Co. type comics: needed 61, found 13
Archie family: needed 33, found 8
Nedor/Standard: needed 5, found 0
Blondie Feature Books: needed 1 (#27), found 0
Certain DC funny animal titles: needed 41, found 9
DC romance comics from the 1964-71 period: needed 26, found 8
ACG romance comics: needed 23, found 2
Ace romance comics: needed 11, found 2
Gleason romance comics: needed 8, found 3
Ajax romance comics: needed 2, found 1
St. John romance comics: needed 54, found 10
Dell Giants: needed 5, found 0
Tweety & Sylvester: needed 1, found 1
Miscellaneous 1950's titles: needed 70, found 4

This splash panel from the newly discovered Diary Secrets giant is filled with jealousy, cheesecake, and garter belts!

DON'T FORGET, LESTER LEROY FROM HOLLYWOOD IS OUT THERE TO LOOK US OVER. LET'S GIVE HIM SOMETHING THAT WILL OPEN HIS EYES.
STOP RAVING ABOUT HIM. I'M NOT SURE I WOULD SIGN EVEN IF HE OFFERED US A CONTRACT.
Coming from three generations of show people hadn't made the long pull upwards easy for me. I'd worked hard to get my first break as part of a dancing team in the hit musical "Fun Time." When the show was in its third month, I thought I might be on the threshold of Hollywood... never dreaming what heartbreak and tragedy were in store for me.

I won't list all of the miscellaneous issues I sought. But I ask you—did *anyone* find *Dizzy Dames* #2, 4 and 6; *G.I. Jane* #2, 3, 5, 8, 9, 10 and 11; *Oh, Brother!* #1 and 5; *Junior Miss* #27; *Patty Powers* #4, 5 and 6; *Slick Chick* #2; *Sweetie Pie* #2; or *Tuffy* #9?

Let me tell you, folks, it gets pretty frustrating out there in the aisles!

But it's also fun. After all, I probably could not have afforded to buy all 341 comics even if I had found all of them!

I got the impression that fewer than 10% of the 40,000 plus people who attended were seriously interested in old comics. That's fine, since if people weren't at all interested in current comics and other related items, the market for back issues would have no future, whether you're talking Golden Age or 1980's issues.

I find it ironic, but not surprising, that there were multiple issues of most of the key Golden Age comics on display—millions and millions of dollars' worth—yet there wasn't an issue of *G.I. Jane* #2, worth about $6, to be found anywhere! At least not by this eagle-eyed comic collector!

Naturally, many dealers tend to bring only their best stuff, especially if they don't have surface transportation. However, there are still plenty of dealers who bring old comics in the $2-20 range. It's just that so many comics aren't available at all at any given convention.

Thinking back, I've never found more than one third of my primary wants at any convention, even at prices I could not afford!

That's why the thrill of the chase—along with the opportunity to renew old friendships at San Diego—makes comic collecting so much fun.

I guess I just wanted to show *CBM* readers that even if I had come to the convention with a million dollars, there were more than 200 comics I would not have been able to acquire!

So have patience, folks—true comic collectors need to be in the hobby... for the long haul!

JIM WARREN... The King of Horror Publishing!

BY PAT S. CALHOUN

In 1964 a young publisher reanimated a comics genre that many feared, and others hoped, had been laid to rest forever: horror. His name was Jim Warren, and although he was a relative newcomer to comics publishing, he was a veteran at putting out a magazine that appealed to the youth market for fantasy and horror: *Famous Monsters of Filmland*. The magazine concept was the key to the whole project. For the Comics Code Authority set up by several of the big publishers had killed comic-formatted horror in 1954, after a Senate committee had told the industry to clean up, but Warren remembered how Bill Gaines, publisher of EC, a leader in pre-Code horror, had finally circumvented the Code by taking his top title—*MAD*—and making it into a magazine outside the reach of the CCA. Warren's derivative approach was to publish horror comics in magazine format and claim the same immunity.

Warren also employed a number of the artists Gaines had used at EC: acclaimed masters like Frank Frazetta, Reed Crandall, Al Williamson, Joe Orlando, and Jack Davis. And Warren had a great writer (soon to be great editor as well) who came into his own with the first issues of *Creepy*, Archie Goodwin. *Creepy* emerged full-blown—with a magazine price of 35¢, but offering 52 big (8½ x 11") pages—and the historic first issue (Winter 1964) is still arguably the best of the run.

One might have been tempted to mourn the absence of color inside, but these top-drawer artists put black and white to superb advantage. The Frazetta-drawn "Werewolf" in *Creepy* #1 is a masterpiece of tone and shading, and Crandall's linework on "Vampires Fly at Dusk" is a joy—with a solid Goodwin script. #1 also contains excellent art by Gray Morrow and Angelo Torres, both of whom were just getting started in the field as the EC era was ended.

Gene Colan's "Hatchet Man" from **Eerie** #4 (Jul 1966) "Time to hack your way to another slice of horror..."

Older fans who recall the vanished glory of EC and pre-Code horror welcomed back a dear friend, and even younger readers who'd missed EC realized intuitively that *Creepy* filled a void. 35¢ was almost three comics, but quality was worth it: we knew, we paid, we loved it!

Creepy #2 (Spring 1965) answered the prayers of fans who had been fervently hoping that #1 was not a one-shot miracle. And the indicia now listed the publication frequency as bi-monthly! Frazetta's "Cat People" cover sets the tone of overwhelming supernatural menace and all-out horror, and the contents fully sustain it. "Fun and Games" by Goodwin and Orlando is a classic tale of fantastic crime and punishment with brutally realistic art.

Orlando also drew Otto Binder's adaptation of his own original Adam Link yarn, "I, Robot." The Warren version is similar, but subtly superior to the EC version. The other highlight of #2 is the Goodwin/Torres "Ogre's Castle." Torres does a marvelous job with the captive maiden who is not what the knight thinks she is… with each rereading the knight's "heroism" seems a little more fatuous.

"Black Magic" a tale nefarious necromancy was written by Archie Goodwin, rendered by Steve Ditko, and published in Eerie #5 (Sep 1966)

In many ways Warren's achievement with *Creepy* surpasses the recognition it has received: not only did he bring back comic book horror—he created comics aimed at adults: a singular and profound accomplishment. And it went on: new artists came in: greats like Steve Ditko, Alex Toth, and Russ Heath. New talents were developed: Neal Adams did some of his early comics work for Warren, and Richard Corben and Bernie Wrightson honed their craft there.

After *Creepy* started as a bi-monthly with #2, Warren developing two other titles: a companion to *Creepy* called *Eerie*, and a war book—*Blazing Combat*, done partially in homage to Harvey Kurtzman's war/anti-war books for EC. As *Eerie* approached completion in mid-1965, Warren heard that a competitor was planning to use the same title, which created a race to see who could get published first and win it. Warren hastily assembled an "ashcan" edition of *Eerie* and had copies mailed to several states and on stands the day a meeting was set to take place between the rival publishers. Warren won the title, and the ashcan—a small b-&-w affair—had an interesting follow-up story in that it was later counterfeited with copies selling for hundreds of dollars to unwary collectors. The FBI investigated, but it was—as much as anything—the "house" announcements concerning the scam that appeared in Warren's mags that put the brakes on the perpetrators.

Blazing Combat was certainly as successful at showing war from a humanitarian viewpoint as Kurtzman's excellent *Frontline Combat* had been. *Blazing Combat* (1965-1966) appeared during the Vietnam War and the anti-war elements did not go unnoticed. By the fourth issue Army PX orders—normally a huge account—were zero, and that issue lost $4,000. Distributors warned Warren that resistance to his anti-war mag would soon affect orders on *Creepy, Eerie*, and *Famous Monsters* as well. *Blazing Combat* was dropped, but is remembered as one of the finest publications in its genre or any other. Archie Goodwin's writing was sure and supple as he probed at moral questions. And the Frazetta covers were magnificent—full of the mythic power that is Frank's trademark.

But despite the bitter demise of *Blazing Combat*, *Creepy* and *Eerie* thrived. Goodwin's scripts were superb, and the artists gave them lavish attention. Among the highlights of this horror harvest were adaptations of classic tales, like the elegant Goodwin/Crandall handling of Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart" in

Berni Wrightson's first published pro-work from the "Fan Fare page" of Creepy #9 © 1965 Wrightson

HEE, HEE! HA, HA! YES, THE AMONTILLADO! BUT IS IT NOT GETTING LATE? MY WIFE AND THE OTHERS WILL BE WAITING FOR US... LET US BE GONE!
YES. LET US BE GONE!
FOR THE LOVE OF GOD, MONTRESOR!

Creepy #3 "The Cask of Amontillado" in *Creepy* #6, and the Goodwin-scripted Jerry Grandenetti-illustrated "The Adventure of the German Student"—Washington Irving's awesome psychological chiller about a lonely man and a lovely corpse that stunned readers of *Creepy* #15.

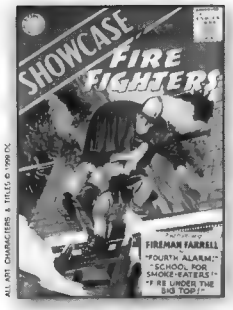
No artist excited superhero fans of the time more than Steve Ditko, and after his definitive runs on Spider-Man and Doctor Strange left them hungry for more, there he was in the Warren horror mags, outdoing himself with the shade and tone effects that b-&-w made possible. And Ditko responded to the inspiring yarns that Goodwin came up with for him—like the macabre "Collector's Edition" from *Creepy* #10 about the dangers of collecting books of black magic and "The Demon Sword" from *Eerie* #8, a compelling tale of a supernatural weapon in a museum that takes possession of a staff professor.

But soon after "The Demon Sword" appeared in 1967 the Warren mags experienced a downturn in the market, due to increased competition, a changing audience, and gradual erosion as the magazine business lost more ground to television. Warren was also bearing the costs of an expensive business move from Philadelphia to New York and the New York offices proved more expensive to maintain. A cashflow crisis led to anxieties in house, and when the artists were unhappy Archie Goodwin was unhappy. He resigned as editor, and many of the artists left, too.

It was a harrowing time for Jim Warren: taking over the editorial chores, relying heavily on reprints, making mistakes in the new material they did publish. It is a testament to his grit that during the middle of the slump he managed to launch his most enduring character, Vampirella. Whereas Uncle Creepy and Cousin Eerie were standard horror hosts relegated to introducing and closing tales about other things, Vampy was a star in her mag—a sexy vampire who predated the comic book bad girl craze by two decades. Conceived by Warren's *Famous Monsters* editor, Forrey Ackerman, with costume design by Trina Robbins, and illustrated by Frank Frazetta, Vampy debuted in *Vampirella* #1 (September, 1969). *(Continued on page 66)*

Goodwin & Reed adapt Poe's "The Cask of Amontillado" in Creepy #6

Brilliant Ditko art coupled with a Goodwin script make "Room With a View!" (Eerie #3, May 1966) an all-time horror classic



ALL ART, CHARACTERS & TITLES © 1999 DC

NOW IN MY NEW PLAY, SILVER, YOU ARE MADLY IN LOVE WITH ME BECAUSE I'M SUCH A RUGGED HANDSOME SPECIMEN OF MANHOOD!
I DIG, WOODY-- IT'S SCIENCE FICTION!

BY JACK ABRAMOWITZ

In all likelihood, the single most significant title of the Silver Age may have been DC's *Showcase*. Aside from launching the careers of many of DC's star characters, as well as numerous second-stringers, this underrated title arguably allowed for the creation of the Silver Age.

The title tha

How so? The superhero genre had all but died, except for DC's "Big Three," Superman, Batman, and Wonder Woman, who had continued uninterrupted from the Golden Age. Even Timely's 1950's attempt to relaunch their "Big Three," Captain America, the Human Torch, and the Sub-Mariner, was unsuccessful and Marvel (as Atlas) relied safely on its monsters. The market was dominated by humor and romance, westerns and science fiction. *Showcase* launched many super-heroic careers, leading directly to the Silver Age at DC, and indirectly at Marvel via their imitation of DC's Justice League in the form of the Fantastic Four.

This direction was clearly not the way *Showcase* was originally intended to go when it first began. Two of the first five issues focused on relatively tame—even mundane—topics. The premiere edition opened with an explanatory letter in comic form, "The Story Behind Showcase." This graphic text page explained that we had the presumably fictitious Larry Blake and other dedicated letter-writers like him to thank for the series which would present stories based on ideas suggested by the readers. The welcome page teased us with the promise of issues focusing on Boy Scouts, Forest Rangers, and movie actresses, but these never appeared. What did appear in many of those early issues was not much more exciting.

The first issue of *Showcase*, which debuted in April, 1955, was "Fire Fighters" and featured Fireman Fred Farrell (sounding not unlike a *Sesame Street* sketch for the letter "F"). We watched as Fireman Farrell graduated from training school and as he saved a baby elephant from a circus blaze. Somehow he failed to secure his own title and faded into obscurity, resurfacing only for a one-panel cameo in *Showcase* #100.

The second issue (June, 1956) featured, "Kings of the Wild" animal stories, and the third and fifth issues (August and December 1956) featured less mundane tryouts… "Frogmen," deep-sea divers—a theme *Showcase* would return to in the form of the Sea Devils, and "Manhunters," who were lawmen.

While these issues represented an admirable attempt at diversity, it was issue #4 (September/October 1956) that truly shouted, "and now for something completely different…" It was in this issue that we first met a fellow known as The Flash.

The original Flash had ceased publication seven years earlier and the decision was made to recycle the name, but to create a new costume, a new origin, and a new secret identity. In what was probably meant as a throwaway bit, nothing more than a tip of the hat, the new Flash was shown deriving his name and inspiration from the comic book adventures of his Golden Age counterpart. Later, certain gaps in logic (such as "How could Superman know both Barry Allen and Jay Garrick if one is just a comic book character?") led to the Earth-One/Earth-Two model of the DC multiverse, the Crisis, hypertime, and other plot devices whose effects are still felt today.

Besides containing the first two Flash and the first two Challengers tryouts, Showcase #1-8 are the only issues which feature the ribbon-style logos (issues #1-5) and the largest of the banner-style "Showcase" logos (issues #6-8)

Continued on page 58 ☛

le that launched the Silver Age!

wcase!

There can be no denying the worldwide cultural influence that the Beatles left on an entire generation. Arriving on American soil soon after the JFK assassination, they were a welcome tonic to a bitter taste of reality that many had to swallow. Being an adolescent during these times was difficult, and the pivotal year of 1968 proved to be a dramatic day in the life of America. Headlines in the newspapers included…the war in Vietnam, the assassinations of Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy, and the head-cracking riots at the Democratic National convention. Civil unrest and a national divisiveness appeared to be the rule of the day.

However, for a brief shining moment, there was a glimmer of optimism during the rancorous summer of '68. And once again, we found the Beatles illuminating the way, this time by *Yellow Submarine*. The London premiere took place during the month of July, 1968. Based on the Lennon/McCartney song, the screenplay was written by Lee Minoff, Al Brodax, Jack Mendelsohn, and Erich Segal from an original story by Lee Minoff. The movie's outstanding design work was the brainchild of Heinz Edelmann. The film was a spectacular psychedelic conclusion to a musical phase of the Beatles career… and a "can't miss" marketing opportunity!

There was an avalanche of products available, including the *Yellow Submarine* comic book published by Western Publishing under the Gold Key imprint. You'll find *Yellow Submarine* listed in the *Price Guide* under "Movie Comics." It is the most expensive issue (in the NM column) under this title. While the *Guide* indicates an issue date of February 1969, the indicia of the comic is dated "1968" and if you will observe the lower right hand panel of page #1, you'll find Western's publishing code "6811" indicating November 1968. If you expect to purchase this book in NM condition with the poster intact, expect to pay anywhere from 1.5-2X *Guide*.

While the static and staid colors of the comic, and the unimaginative layout, could never compete with the aural and visual movie experience, it did hold the promise of a nifty poster that one could put on a bedroom wall and stare at for hours on end!

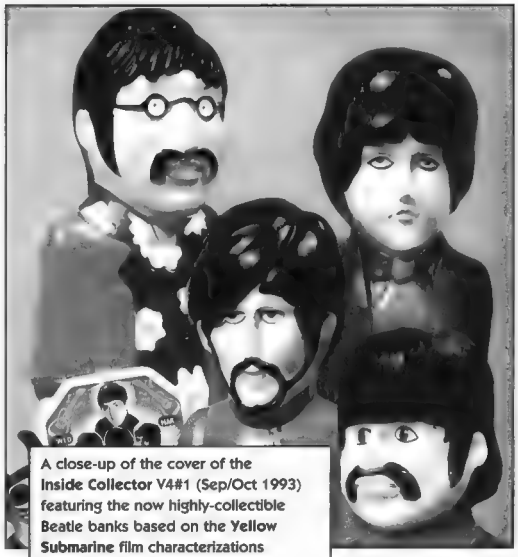
The 68-page, 35¢, advertisement-free comic loosely followed the storyline of the movie. For those of you who don't know or recall the storyline, here's a very brief synopsis.

The Blue Meanies have invaded Pepperland and drained all of the music, beauty, and color from the landscape and the

people. At the same time, they have imprisoned Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band within an impenetrable bubble. Old Fred, the only person not harmed by the Blue Meanies takes the Yellow Submarine to Liverpool where he asks the Beatles for help. After many adventures through Seas of Monsters, Time, Nowhere, Science, Holes, and the Sea of Green they come to Pepperland and eventually destroy the power of the Blue Meanies.

Apart from the main cast of characters, the comic had the minimal story linkage necessary to mirror the movie sequencing. For some unknown reason, perhaps attracting female fans, a new and completely superfluous character, Rita the Meter Maid, was inserted into the comic book. But, most importantly, the movie's rich layering of photographs and animation was completely missing from the four color presentation.

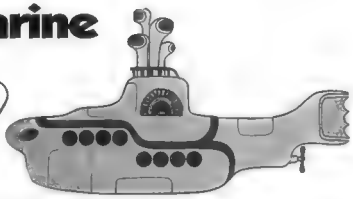
One has to wonder if there might have also been copyright infringement problems in the development of the comic book. The in-house artists—probably from the New York offices of Western, judging by the layout and lettering—chose to ignore the encyclopedic library of critters and creatures that would have added significantly to the rather bland and uninspired panel backgrounds. Did the artist who put this comic together ever see the movie or even like the Beatles' music?



A close-up of the cover of the **Inside Collector** V4#1 (Sep/Oct 1993) featuring the now highly-collectible Beatle banks based on the **Yellow Submarine** film characterizations

Celebrating three decades of the Fab Four-Color Submarine

Yellow Submarine



BY MICHAEL NAIMAN

"Once upon a time, or maybe twice, there was a paradise called Pepperland. It lay 80,000 leagues beneath the sea. The principal natural resources were -and still are- sun... music... laughter... and love. You will not find Pepperland by looking for it. It's a country that must be listened for."

One also has to ask, "What fuzz-braine Western Publishing exec thought that it was 'hip' to place the banner on the front cover of the comic that read "It's an ever-lovin' SUB-in!" Sounds like someone was watching too much of television's Laugh In program!

Admittedly, the comic book had a very difficult act to follow. I suppose that it might have been impossible for any comic book to compete with this movie's kaleidoscopic visual effects and stunning presentation.

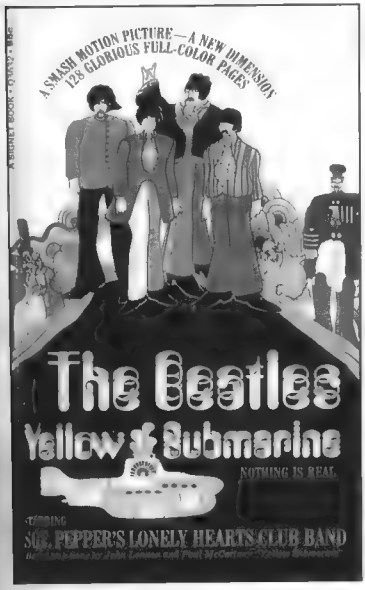
If you get the opportunity to see the re-release of *Yellow Submarine*... don't miss it! It doesn't matter if you are young or old, first time viewer or seeing it for the 100th time... it's a movie that has withstood the test of time. In fact, I'm planning on seeing it... "when I'm 64!" An improved remixed sound track, an added scene and song, and the great digital acoustics in today's theaters all add up to an astounding viewing experience.

Count yourself lucky that it will not be necessary to travel 80,000 leagues under the sea to find Pepperland memorabilia! There are plenty of convenient ports-'o-call available for you to obtain an affordable memento.

At the lower end of the scale, let me recommend a premium that was recently along with the new CD soundtrack. With each purchase you receive, if you ask, an inflatable Yellow Submarine! As of this writing, they're already for sale on eBay for a whopping $20-42... now *that's* capitalism!

The Corgi 803 Yellow Submarine (manufactured from 1969-72) is another little gem. While not impossible to find, it is still a bit costly. When found MIB (Mint in Box)

Movie Comics Yellow Submarine #35000-902 with poster (see inside front cover)
The Beatles Yellow Submarine Signet paperback Q3632 with full-color illustrations throughout


A SMASH MOTION PICTURE—A NEW DIMENSION
128 GLORIOUS FULL-COLOR PAGES
A SIGNET BOOK • QY3632 • 60¢
The Beatles
Yellow Submarine
NOTHING IS REAL
SGT. PEPPER'S LONELY HEARTS CLUB BAND

they can run around $350. Corgi has also manufactured Classic Reproductions of the Yellow Submarine that can be purchased new or on the secondary market from between $45-65. I have seen subs for sale with repro-boxes at $160, and a VG condition sub (no box) with paint chipping for $150.

Issued at the time of the film's release, The Yellow Submarine Figural Banks are extremely difficult to obtain. Each Fab Four figure has a coin slot behind the head in the neck area and the bottom has a hole which would have originally been covered by a rubber stopper. The figures run from $300-600 each depending on condition. Existence of the stopper and the stickers on the bottom, chipping, cracks, and corner nicks on the plaster are typical condition factors that should be considered. The bank boxes were generic, with no graphics, so the typical collector would tend not to spend anything extra for these items. It appears that the George figure is somewhat more difficult to find than the other three, but, in the current marketplace, does not demand a premium price.

Collectors should be aware of the existence of unauthorized reproductions. The lack of a 'Pride' triangular sticker or the 'King Features' circular sticker on the base of each figure is an indicator of a repro (but on the other hand, would it be that hard to manufacture said stickers?). Many hobbyists believe that the originals were less solid and the repros were not designed to hold coins. None of this is gospel, and even seasoned Beatles dealers have a hard time verbalizing any definitive method of identification… so be careful who you buy from!

There may be other Pepperlands and additional exciting Yellow Submarine discoveries waiting to be unearthed by the diligent collector. Here, there, anywhere. You can also be sure that there will be Meanies in the vicinity trying to grab that collectible before you get to it! It is up to you, dear reader, to take the appropriate measures!

One, Two, Three, Four… (you know the tune!)

It's been over 30 years ago today, since Sgt. Pepper taught the band to play, they've been going in and out of style, but they're guaranteed to raise a smile, so may I re-introduce to you, the comic you've known for all these years… Western Publishing's *Yellow Submarine*!

Thanks to Mick Rabin, Pat Calhoun, and Scott Shaw! for their invaluable input.

An Introduction to Superior Comics

Strip away the hokey elements and Iger shop art from these relatively rare pre-Code comics and what's left is a refreshing retreat into a sordid underworld of junkies, quack doctors and desolate bus stations—all spiraling down into violence that would have impressed the likes of De Sade.

BUT...
I'LL JUST—OH! SOMEBODY ELSE IN THERE, A BOY AND A GIRL—IN LOVE! I WON'T DISTURB THEM!
IT'S VERY LATE, DARLING! I REALLY MUST GO NOW!
IN A MOMENT, SWEET! JUST ONE MORE KISS!
OVER THE GROTESQUE THING STEALS A POIGNANT SENSE OF NOSTALGIA...
LOVERS! NOW I REMEMBER—THE TENDERNESS, THE TOUCH OF A WOMAN'S LIPS! SO LONG AGO! I'LL JUST STEAL AWAY, AND...
SUDDENLY...
EEEEEEEE! STEVE, LOOK!
GREAT SCOTT! WHAT IS IT? SOME KIND OF FIEND!
N-NO PLEASE! I WON'T HARM YOU! I'M GOING NOW!
THE POLICE CATCH UP...
MUST BE AROUND HERE SOMEWHERE! MAYBE IN THAT SHELTER HOUSE!
LET'S TAKE A LOOK!
RUN, HONEY! WE DON'T WANT TO GET MIXED UP IN ANYTHING!

The standard-bearer for pre-Code horror comic books was the EC publishing house, but the often overlooked second tier of that genre included Superior, a far smaller publisher from Canada which received little respect during the horror trend of the early 1950s. Often mocked for their Jack Kamen-esque derivative look, Superior's three horror titles were *Journey Into Fear*, their terror flagship, *Mysteries Weird and Strange*, and *Strange Mysteries*. It's the enthusiastic contention of this article that Superior horror comics deserve more regard and research from today's savvy collectors because of the almost surreal quality of their better stories.

EC comics have long held the reputation for having some of the finest art in all of comics, but when it came to writing, ECs other than the great Bradbury-based issues often felt forced and formulaic. How many of us have read a *Vault of Horror* or a *Tales From The Crypt*, with page after page of creepy perfection by artists like Graham Ingels, only to reach the climax of a tale and find disappointment with an annoying "snap" ending and an unsatisfying moral twist that seems forced?

Superior horror comics offered a refreshing release from such moralizing! I would argue that Superior's lack of artistic pretension and its reliance on a sort of charming, surreal underworld of run-down bus stations, junkies with d.t.'s, and

BY CHRISTOPHER NELSON

quacks offering hypodermic formulations gives them the sort of charm that collectors would be smart to latch on to.

In my research on the subject of Superior I have found little about the origins of this material, other than that the substance of these books were created by the Jerry Iger Studios. It seems that the Iger Studios were past their golden years by the time they started to produce these books, but ghouls sold well and Iger probably wanted to cash in on the horror trend.

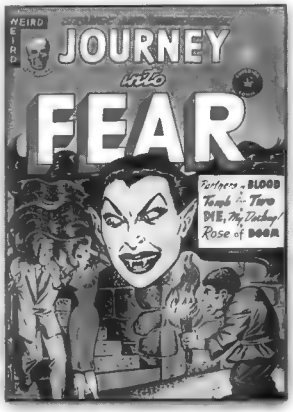
During the heyday of Superior horror comics, what was the situation at the Iger studio? At that point Iger was a free lance outfit that composed comic stories for many publishers besides Superior, from Ajax-Farrell to Quality and Star. So who was with Iger at the time? What poor souls were creating such tremendously strange horror stories? Were they burnt-out, frustrated artists on the skids? Mentally-addled hacks? War vets trying to exorcise battle demons? Or maybe they were serious creators stuck in a medium that they felt was demeaning, forced to work in an assembly line method that might as well have been piecing together vacuum cleaners!

Superior horror comics might be considered as unconscious expressions of the age, like a bad set of hangovers from the hell of World War II. In "Return of the Ghoul" from *Journey Into Fear* #15, a corpse is suddenly revived from an eternal slumber. Enthusiastically, the ghoul hits the streets. The story relates his misadventures through the world of the living. Though he has no malevolent intentions, after an encounter with one of the living he finds that, "...everyone will be against me, they'll

JOURNEY INTO FEAR
WOW! NOTHING WILL STOP ME THIS TIME! I AM SO THIRSTY! SO THIRSTY
SOMETHING AWAKENS ROSE.
OHH—SUCH A FUNNY DREAM! MY THROAT! A LITTLE SORE.
DO NOT BE AFRAID, GIRL! YOU MUST OBEY! YOU ARE ONE OF US NOW. DO YOU UNDERSTAND?
ONE OF Y-YOU! YES—I UNDERSTAND I AM NOT AFRAID OF YOU
GOOD! YOU ARE A VAMPIRE NOW, ROSE! YOU WILL BE IMMORTAL.
YES I OBEY I AM A VAMPIRE NOW

FACING PAGE
A panel from "Horror Unseen" in Journey into Fear #15 (Jan 1954)

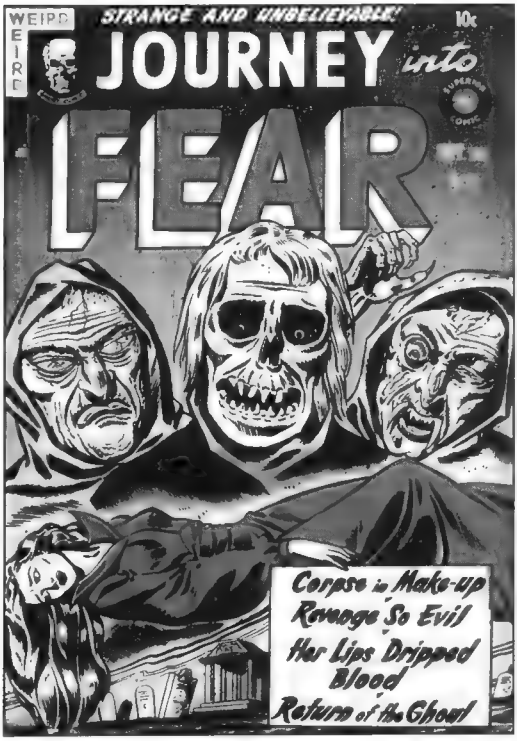
Journey into Fear #6 (Mar 1952) featuring "Partners in Blood," (sample page above) "Tomb for Two," and "Die, My Darling!"

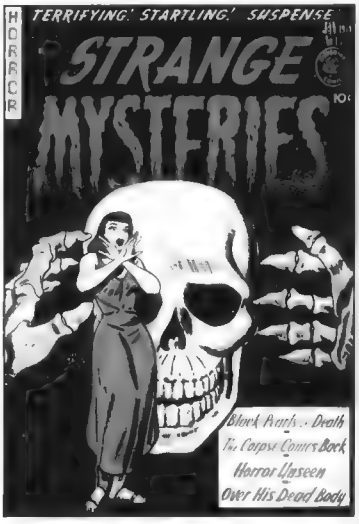


Superior Comics

want to kill me, make me go back to my grave!" Rejected and hounded, he fails this second chance at life, so he retreats back to the cemetery: "No use! I should have known it all along! They're all against you when you're dead! I must go back!" As he settles into his grave, he realizes, "...The joke was on me all the time! You can never come back because the living won't let you!" Could that ...have been a metaphor for the vets of WWII trying to return to their former lives?

One assumes that the Superior house demanded that the Iger Studios produce stuff that would sell well. Besides walking corpses, there was that other staple of best-selling comics, sex. The situations in the Superior comics displayed many of the insecurities associated with the relationships of men and women at the dawn of the frightening Atomic Age; and also a certain sense of surreal derangement. "Partners in Blood," from *Journey into Fear* #6, is a tense, erotic tale. The premise of the story is the generic stuff of vampires and such. But strip away the hokey elements and what is left is the story of an older woman seducing a younger girl. A slow, careful seduction occurs, and then the whole thing quickly spirals into violence that would have impressed the Marquis de Sade.





The Canadian maple leaf dominates the Superior Comic logo on Journey into Fear #15 and Strange Mysteries #15 both dated January, 1954

I'M MADE OF GLASS, CYNTHIA! UNDERSTAND THAT? GLASS.! AND I'M SORRY YOU FOUND OUT, BECAUSE NOW, WELL, I CAN'T LET YOU LIVE, CAN I?
EEEEEEEEEE—

All of which leaves me wondering: was this stuff really created for *children*? Exactly *who* were these people in charge of Superior, and would they have possibly allowed even their own children to read such material? It's the sort of subject matter that made Dr. Wertham's skin crawl, and produced the Comics Code, and it makes me more than just a bit curious about the inside story of Superior Publishing Limited.

Besides the sleaze that Superior published, which extended beyond horror to war and romance comics as well, it was a company notorious for dubious business practices. Especially towards the end of their titles' runs, Superior reprinted previous material more than once, and even used panel art as cover art—of course never alerting potential buyers. It seems clear that Superior made absolutely no pretense of trying to develop a sustained readership like that enjoyed by EC.

Other than Jerry Iger, who was profiled in a biography not too long ago, whatever became of the people associated with Superior? To my knowledge, nobody at Superior itself left behind bios of any sort, nor did anyone there seem to leave and carve out a name elsewhere in the business. Perhaps longtime Superior and EC aficionado/researcher Ken Kaffke of San Francisco will answer some of these terror-filled questions in a future *CBM*.

After the onset of the Comics Code and the end of their business in 1955, the folks at Superior seemed to have retreated to their cemeteries, so to speak. But a handful of Superior comics haunt the shelves of dealers and are worth a serious look, especially at the stories themselves, many of which still feel relevant today.

A severed hand threatens a scantily-clad victim on the cover of Mysteries Weird and Strange #10 (Nov 1954). ABOVE LEFT: Being made of glass can be a real pane... er, pain... even if your personality is transparent! (groan) That's what Cynthia found out in Strange Myst. #15 (Jan 1954)

HORROR GALLERY

RARE SUPERIOR PRE-CODE GEMS

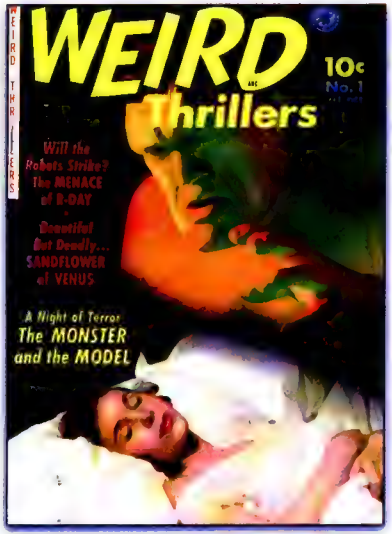
NOTE: All 32 Color Gallery covers are Spokane pedigree copies courtesy the Bob Casali collection

TOP: L TO R
Journey Into Fear #10 (Nov 1952)

Strange Mysteries #3 (Jan 1952)

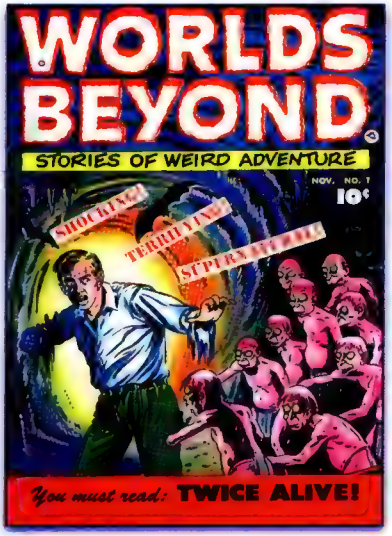
BOTTOM: L TO R
Journey Into Fear #14 (Jul 1953)

Journey Into Fear #13 (May 1953)

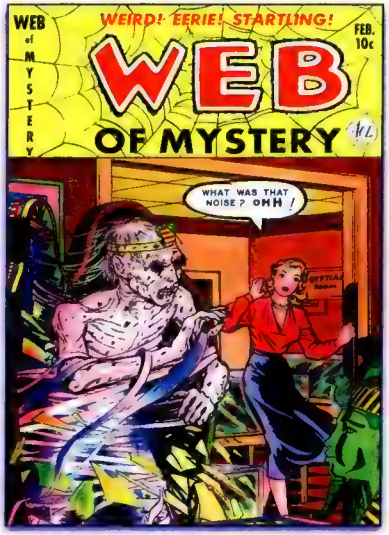


Weird Thrillers #1 (Sep/Oct 1951; © Ziff-Davis; Ross Andru art, Rondo Hatten collage cover)

Weird Adventure #3 (Oct 1951; © P.L. Publ.; "The Ghoulish Revenge of Dr. Psycha")



Worlds Beyond #1 (Nov 1951; © Fawcett; Shelly Moldoff cover; "Twice Alive" & "Vengeance of the Living Dead" by Bernard Baily)



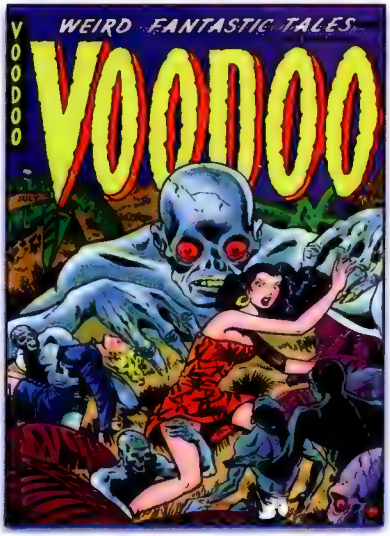
Web of Mystery #7 (Feb 1952; © Ace)

Witches Tales #11 (Jun 1952; © Harvey; "Monster Maker" & "The Buried Mummy")

Strange Suspense Stories #1 (Jun 1952; © Fawcett; Shelly Moldoff cover; Bernard Bailey story)

Unknown World #1 (Jun 1952; © Fawcett; Norman Saunders painted cover; "The Serpent Queen")

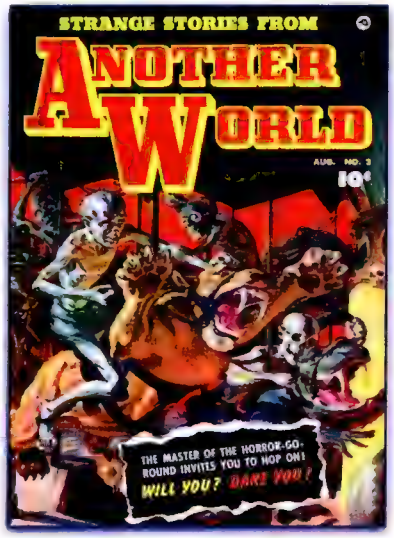
Nightmare #1 (Summer 1952; © Ziff-Davis; Don Heck story)



Voodoo #2 (Jul 1952; © Farrel; "Zombie Bride" & "The Antilla Terror" by Baker)

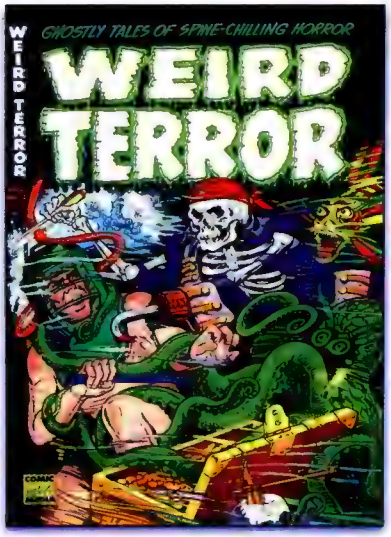
THE HAND OF
FATE
AUG. 10¢
NO ONE COULD GET OUT OF THAT WRECK ALIVE / WHA...! THAT GIRL WASN'T KILLED / IT'S AS IF FATE SAVED HER AT THE LAST INSTANT!

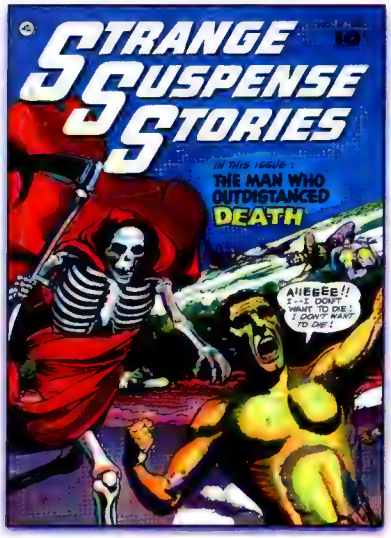
Hand Of Fate #12 (Aug 1952; © Ace)



Strange Stories from Another World #2 (Aug 1952; © Fawcett; Norman Saunders painted cover)

Tomb Of Terror #5 (Oct 1952; © Harvey; "The Rat Man" & "Head of the Medusa")





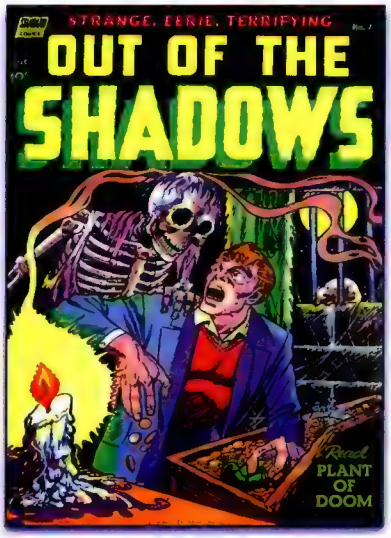
Weird Terror #2 (Nov 1952; © Comic Media; Don Heck; "Wrath of Satan")

Strange Suspense Stories #4 (Dec 1952; © Fawcett; "The Man who Outdistanced Death" & "Curiosity Killed the Ghost")

WEIRD Thrillers
10¢
No. 2
THE FISHERMAN OF SPACE
All the World Perished Except THE LAST MAN
Death Struck Twice THE CYCLE OF TIME

Weird Thrillers #2 (Winter 1952; © Ziff-Davis; Murphy Anderson's dinosaur classic "Cycle Of Time")

Ghost #2 (1952; © Fiction House; one of the great classic covers)

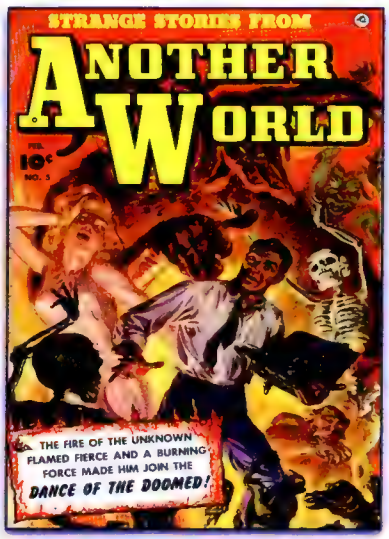


Out of The Shadows #7 (Jan 1953; © Standard; Jack Katz art)

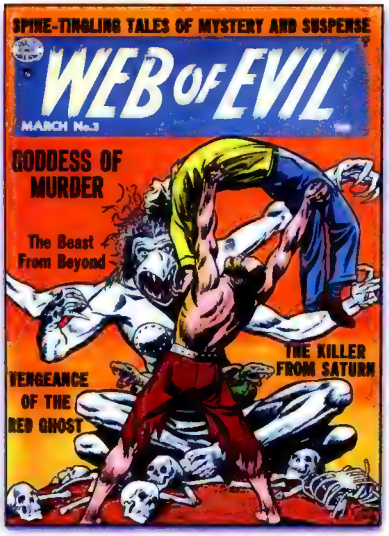
Suspense Comics #26 (Jan1953; Atlas; © MEG; Joe Maneely story)

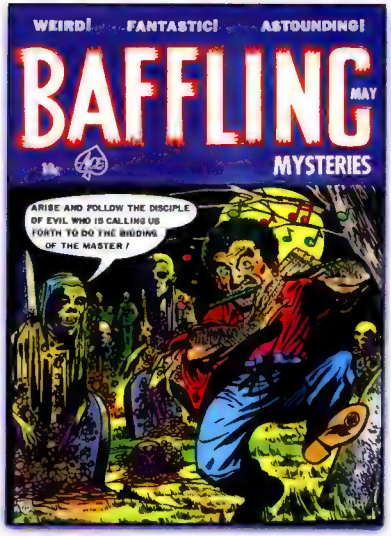
WITCHES TALES
WE DARE YOU
WITCHES TALES
WEIRD YARNS OF UNSEEN TERRORS
MAGAZINE
A THING TO COME? A HORROR FROM THE PAST? WHAT IS THE LOATHSOME MEANING OF THE TWISTED ETERNITY FOUND IN...
DIMENSION IV

Witches Tales #17 (Feb 1953; © Harvey; "Dimension IV" & "Creatures of the Bomb!")


STRANGE STORIES FROM
ANOTHER WORLD
FEB. 10¢ NO. 5
THE FIRE OF THE UNKNOWN FLAMED FIERCE AND A BURNING FORCE MADE HIM JOIN THE
DANCE OF THE DOOMED!

Strange Stories from Another World #5 (Feb 1953; © Fawcett; Norman Saunders painted cover; Human Torch like character in "Flaming Witness" & "Dance of the Doomed")




WEIRD! FANTASTIC! ASTOUNDING!
BAFFLING
MAY
MYSTERIES
ARISE AND FOLLOW THE DISCIPLE OF EVIL WHO IS CALLING US FORTH TO DO THE BIDDING OF THE MASTER!

Web Of Evil #3 (Mar 1953; an undervalued and often overlooked horror title from Quality; Jack Cole art; "The Killer from Saturn" & "Goddess of Murder"

Baffling Mysteries #15 (May 1953; © Ace)

Beyond #20 (May 1953; © Ace; Lou Cameron cover)

Men's Adventures #22 (Jun 1953; Atlas; © MEG; Russ Heath & Bill Everett)

HORROR GALLERY

A QUARTET OF CAULDRON COVERS

Haunted Thrills #9 (May 1953; © Farrell)

Suspense Comics #24 (Nov 1952; Atlas; © MEG; Joe Maneely story)

Witchcraft #4 (Sep/Oct 1952; © Avon; Hollingsworth cover and story; inside front cover art by Kinstler)

Beware Terror Tales #8 (Jul 1953; © Fawcett; last issue)

THE TRUE STORY OF THE

Spokane Collection Pedigree

by Mark Haspel with Brian Faraci

"Wow!" That is what I said when I got my first look at some of the books from the Spokane Collection."I just can't believe it," I went on, "The condition on these books is magnificent!" At that time there was no "Spokane" collection, it was just another grouping of books I was buying. I had just received 10 comic books from a gentleman out of New Orleans and they were breathtaking. I flew there and bought 171 more comic books. This is the story of the discovery of and disbursement of those comics… the Spokane Collection.

The Spokane Collection was the first widely accepted Golden Age pedigree collection to surface in the '90s and it is unique in many ways. Other collections have appeared during this decade, but most have met with mixed acceptance in the market. The Spokane Collection gained wide acceptance from the marketplace quickly, once major market participants began to view the books. Spokane books have unsurpassed whiteness levels for their time period. More unusual is that the interior covers share a freshness and gloss that is better than most new comics published today. Some collectors have even taken to calling the Spokane Collection the Mile High II Collection.

While not quite the size of the Larson or Mile High Collections, the Spokane Collection is a significant accumulation of comic books. It consists of approximately 1,020 comic books dating as far back as 1942 (*World's Finest* #5) and as late as 1957 (*MAD* #48). Some books grade Fair. Others NM/M. About 800-850 of them were VF or better. All have breathtaking whiteness that has to be seen to be believed, but the lucky collectors out there who own them know what I am talking about. The grades get dramatically better in the material published about 1946 or 1947.

Brian Faraci found this unique collection on an Internet newsgroup, making it the first pedigree collection to be found on the Internet. On the afternoon of December 23, 1997, Brian E-mailed a gentleman who had placed one free ad online. The ad simply stated that the fellow had "Gold and Silver Age comic books for sale," and invited inquiries. Brian asked if he had any *Batman*, *Weird Mysteries*, *World's Finest*, *Superman*, or *Wonder Woman* comics for sale.

On the afternoon of December 24, 1997, Brian contacted me and told me of the collection. He also told me he had just received a list of *Batmans*, *World's Finest*, and *Weird Mysteries*. The gentleman, Robbie, did not have the other titles Brian had asked for, but he DID have *Batman* #14-78, *World's Finest* #5-64, and *Weird Mysteries* #3 and 4. It was a lot of work to price out the *World's Finest* and *Batmans*, so Robbie had just priced out the *Weird Mysteries*, since there were only two of them. Brian needed advice about the two *Weird Mysteries*, so he asked me if he should purchase them, which he immediately did. Brian advised me that when the two books arrived he would call me to discuss their grades, and how he wanted to handle the rest of the collection. He told me that he had spoken to Robbie and received assurances that as he was the first person to respond to the posting he had first shot at the comics, so there was no rush.

Three days later Brian received the two books and a complete list of comics in the collection. He immediately called me and he could barely contain himself as he described the two comics. He said that both were in stunning condition, with white paper and cover gloss that made them look like new. We came to an agreement by which I would contact Robbie and purchase some of the comics myself, so I could get a sense of their conditions, and if I liked what I saw I would travel to Louisiana and view the collection. In return, Brian would get to keep several choice books, I would pay him a finder's fee, and we would be partners on some of the best comics in the collection. I called Robbie the next day.

When I called Robbie I found him to be an intelligent, warm, friendly person who I genuinely enjoyed talking to. I got descriptions and prices for some 15 comics and bought 10 of them. Based upon my satisfaction with those books I arranged to go to New Orleans to purchase more. In the meantime on December 29th, 1997, I received *Horrific* #3, 4, and 5, *Weird Tales of the Future* #6, 7, and 8, *Out of the Shadows* #8, *Witchcraft* 5, *Worlds of Fear* #9 and 10. The *Witchcraft* #5 was the only one graded NM by Robbie. When he told me over the phone that it was NM I almost burst out laughing. Like many of you, I had bought and sold thousands upon thousands of Golden Age and Silver Age comic books. A true NM is a very rare thing indeed. I was no longer laughing. My face went pale as I held the book. It was indeed a true NM. After talking some more with Robbie,

We'd like you to write for us!

Contact the CBM Editorial Department

619•437•1996

I travelled January 5th, 1998 to buy more of this remarkable collection.

Before I went to New Orleans to view the collection, I found out that there had been exactly three previous transactions. Brian had bought his two *Weird Mysteries*. Someone off the newsgroup had purchased a *MAD* #19… and sent it back! Also, someone had bought the *Phantom Stranger* #1 and had called back wanting to buy more. But I was the first person to go look at the books in person.

I spent 28 hours in New Orleans, none of them sleeping! Robbie and I stayed awake all day and night examining the contents of the four long boxes and one magazine box which held this amazing collection. Opening the boxes was like magic… revealing hundreds of comic books that looked like they had just come off the presses. For over 20 hours, I took out most of the comic books and looked them over, taking notes and pricing them out. Robbie and I came to a price that took every cent I was carrying and I flew back to Florida with 171 more of those incredible books.

While we were going through the collection, Robbie was kind enough to explain the background of the collection. The collection was accumulated by his mother's boyfriend, a gentleman named Corky. I was told Corky decided to sell his comic books and chose Robbie to represent him. Corky lives in Spokane, Washington in a secluded area.

During the Golden Age time period, Corky had bought comics like every other regular kid. But he never let any of his classmates touch them. I was told that Corky could be a little quirky. He loved looking at the covers and kept them neatly stacked in his "closet," which was described to me as an old walk-in cooler used to store his clothes.

Corky stacked his comic books in a unique manner, one face up, one face down, one face up, one face down, etc. Every few months, he would take a stack and look at every cover as he reversed the stacking. This kept the books from gathering dust, getting sun/dust shadows, helped them retain their gloss and stopped any spine rolls from forming. Corky's storage technique must have worked, because out of the 1,020 books there are maybe four that have a slight spine-roll.

Brian and I sold most of the books to collectors and dealers. Between the two of us, we had 183 of the best, highest grade pre-Code horror comics that exist. Shortly after Brian and I purchased our piece of the Spokane Collection, Steve Fishler and Vincent Zurzolo, Jr. of Metropolis Collectibles, came to an arrangement with Robbie and purchased the remainder of the books. A while after that, Steve told me that he had actually talked to Corky himself and had bought an additional 35-45 books directly from Corky himself.

Several collectors and Ye *CBM* Editor inquired about the Spokane Collection's true origin. There has been a great deal of misinformation about the Spokane Collection's discovery. So it is our hope that the information given here provides collectors with the information provided here will assist collectors who purchase Spokane pedigree books in the future, and also help set the collection firmly into comic book history.

Most Spokane books have a stamp on the cover that has the month, date and year. This becomes more and more prevalent in the collection as the books get in higher grades. Therefore, the best condition books from this collection usually have a stamp. The date stamp commonly has an 'A' or a 'K' before or after it, but not always. There are examples of Spokane books without date stamps and some examples with the date stamp but no 'A' or 'K'.

The checklist accompanying this article is not an edited version. Many books listed here were only in Fair or Good condition. I did not review the *Classics Illustrated*, so no list of these issues is included. Also, the *Classics Illustrated* were mostly in binders with rubber bands through the centerfold of each book. It also includes NM books in less demand to the majority of collectors, such as *Humphrey Comics*. The only books missing from the list are the books Steve Fishler and Vincent Zurzolo, Jr. purchased directly from Corky.

Brian Faraci has been collecting comic books since 1976, buying and selling comics on the Internet since 1989, and is a long-time DC Golden Age fan. He is currently selling Golden Age comic books on eBay under the screen name newfuncomics. Brian can be reached at bfscomics@aol.com. Mark Haspel is a lifelong collector of comic books who operated a Golden Age mail order/auction business named Comics On Parade. He recently left his comic book business and moved to New Jersey to take a position at Comics Guaranty, L.L.C. as a grader. Mark can be reached at mhaspel@cgccomics.com.

A CBM CHECKLIST

The Spokane Collection...

Adventures into Darkness #5-10 (2 copies of #9)
Adventures into Terror #44 (#2), #4, #6, #7, #9, #10
Adventures into the Unknown #12, #14, #18, #19, #23-26, #29-33, #35-38, #40-42
Adventures into Weird Worlds #1-3, #5-19
Airboy (7 issues, Unknown Vol) #2, #7-12
All-Star #36
Amazing Adventures (Ziff-Davis) #2, #3, #5, #6
Amaz. Detective Cases #12-14
Astonishing #3, #4, #6-14, #16-20, #23, #24
Atom Age Combat #3-5
Atomic War #1, #2
Attack on Planet Mars (nn)
Baffling Mysteries #5, #7-9, #12, #14-17
Batman #14-54, #56, #58-78
Beware #15 (#3)
Beware Terror Tales #1, #2, #4-8
Beyond #1, #3, #5-9, #11-14, #20
Black Cat Mystery #31, #33-44
Blackhawk #65
Black Magic V1#1, V1#5, V2#1-V2#6
Blue Bolt Weird Tales #111, #113-115, #117-119
Buck Rogers #9
Capt Rocket #1
Capt Video #1
Chamber of Chills #15-18
City of the Living Dead (nn)
Classics Illustrated (approx. 120, all in binders)
Crime Does Not Pay #123
Crime Suspenstories #12, #16-18
Crusaders from Mars #1, #2
Danger is our Business #1
Dead Who Walk (nn)
Destination Moon (Fawcett Movie Comics, nn)
Detective Comics #154, #172-197
Diary of Horror #1
Dick Tracy (Dell) #1-29, #33, #35, #37, #38, #43, #49, #63, #64
Eerie #1-4, #7-11
Eerie Adventures #1
Explorer Joe #2
Fantastic Fears #7 (#1), #8 (#2)
Fantastic Worlds #5-7
Flash Gordon (Four Color) #424
Flying Saucers #1 (nn)
Forbidden Worlds #1-15, #17, #18
Four Color #34 (Dick Tracy), #56 (Dick Tracy), #96 (Dick Tracy), #133 (Dick Tracy), #163 (Dick Tracy), #375 (John Carter of Mars), #437 (John Carter of Mars),
Frankenstein #20, #25
Ghost #1-6
Ghost Rider #7
Hand of Fate #9, #11, #12, #19
Haunted Thrills #1, #4, #6-10
He-Man #1
Horrific #3-5
Horrors of Mystery #13
House of Mystery #2-17
Humbug #2
Humphrey Comics #1-8, #10, #11, #15, #16
Journey into Fear #3, #4, #7, #8, #10-14
Journey into Mystery #1, #2
Journey into Unknown Worlds #36 (#1), #9-12
King Solomon's Mine (nn)
Lars of Mars #10, #11
Little Max #1-5, #9-11, #15, 16
Lost Worlds #5, #6
Mad #1-6, #10-13, #17, #19, #20, #20, #21, #21, #22-26, #28, #29, #31-34, #36-40, #43-48
Man Comics #27, #28
Man From Planet X (Fawcett Movie Comics 15)
Man O Mars #1
Marvel Tales #95, #97, #99-115
Marvel Family #71
Mask of Dr. Fu Manchu (nn)
Men's Adventures #21-23
Mister Mystery #1-5, #8, #10, #11
Monster #1
Mysteries Weird and Strange #1, #2 (Superior)
Mysterious Adventures #1
Mystery in Space #1-15
Mystery Tales #1-3, #5, #9-11
Mystic #5, #9-11, #13-15, #17-19
Nightmare #1, #2
Night of Mystery (nn)
Out of the Night #1-4
Out of the Shadows #5-9
Panic #4-8, #11, #12
Perfect Crime #33
Phantom Stranger #1-5
Phantom Witch Doctor #1
Planet Comics #59, #65-70
Purple Claw #1-3
Real Fact Comics #5
Real Sports Comics #1
Robotmen of the Lost Planet #1
Rocketman #1
Rocket to the Moon (nn)
Secret Diary of Eerie Adventures (nn)
Sensation Mystery #112-115
Shocking Mystery Cases #50-55
Shock Suspenstories #4, #7-9
Space Ace #5
Space Action #1-3
Space Adventures #2-6
Space Busters #1, 2
Space Detective #1-4
Space Patrol #1, #2
Space Squadron #2-5
Space Western #40-45
Space Worlds #6
Spaceman #1
Spellbound #2, #4, #5
Spook #22, #24, #25
Star Spangled Comics #108, #118-130
Startling Terror Tales #5, #10-14
Strange Adventures #3-33
Strange Fantasy #2, #6
Strange Mysteries #1-12
Strange Stories from Another World #2-5
Strange Suspenstories #1-5
Strange Tales #1, #6-9
Strange Terrors #1, #2, #5
Strange World of Your Dreams #2
Strange Worlds #2, #3, #6-9
Suspense #3, #5-9, #15-21, #23-29
Suspense Detective #2, #5
Tales From The Crypt #20
Tales of Horror #1-6
Tales of Terror (Toby) #1
Terrifying Tales #11, #13
Thing #4-7, #9
This Mag. is Haunted #7-12
Tom Corbett: Space Cadet FC #378, FC#400, FC#421, #4, #5, #7
Tomb of Terror #1, #5, #7-10
Two-Fisted Tales #32, #33
Uncanny Tales #1, #2
Unseen #5, #6, #8, #10, #11
Vault of Horror #28-30
Venus #12-14, #16, #17, #19
Vic Torry and His Flying Saucers (nn)
Voodoo #2, #7-9
Web of Evil #1-5
Web of Myst. #3, #5-7, #9-12
Weird Adventures (Z-D) #10
Weird Adventures #3
Weird Fantasy #13, #15, #17-19
Weird Horrors #1-3, #6, #8
Weird Mysteries #3, #4
Weird Science #13 (1950), #13 (1952), #14, #16-20
Weird Tales of the Future #1, #2, #6-8
Weird Terror #2, #3, #5
Weird Thrillers #1, #2, #4, #5
When Worlds Collide (Motion Picture Comics #110)
Witchcraft #1, #3-6
Witches Tales #3, #6-11, #15-19
Worlds Beyond #1
World's Finest Comics #5, #7, #8, #10, #12-29, #31-33, #42, #46, #48, #49, #54, #57-62, #64
Worlds of Fear #3-5, #7-10
Young Men #21
Zip-Jet #1, #2

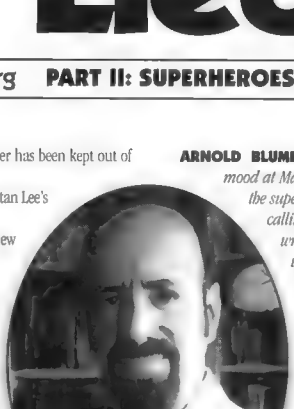
There are an additional 35-45 books that Steve Fishler purchased directly from the original owner. There are no pre-Code iconic covers in this that group.

A MOMENT LATER, A HUGE, THREE-DIMENSIONAL PICTURE FLASHES ACROSS THE SKY!
WHA--? WHAT IN THE NAME OF HEAVEN IS IT??
IT'S HEADING RIGHT FOR US! WE CAN'T BANK IN TIME!!
BAIL OUT!!
HIT THE SILK!!
9

Marvel's Mystery Man...
Larry Lieber

Interview by Arnold T. Blumberg **PART II: SUPERHEROES AND SIX-GUNS!**

For years, Marvel Comics writer and artist Larry Lieber has been kept out of the spotlight too often, relegated to the position of "Stan Lee's younger brother." In part I of our exclusive interview (*CBM* #72) Larry talked about the beginnings of his professional life and his early experiences in comics just prior to the dawn of the "Marvel Age." As Part II begins, the '60s usher in a new era in comics, and Larry discusses the birth of the Marvel superheroes, his work on the western adventure series, The Rawhide Kid, and his involvement in the short-lived Atlas/Seaboard line of publications in the 1970s.



ARNOLD BLUMBERG: *We were talking about the mood at Marvel just prior to the introduction of the superhero comics. Martin Goodman was calling it "a dying industry." You were writing for the monster books, which were drawn by artists like Jack Kirby and Steve Ditko. What happened next, Larry?*

LARRY LIEBER: I was writing for a few years, and after a while they started to put out the superheroes, the history of which you and your readers probably know better than I do. Somewhere along the line I wanted to draw as well as write. I don't remember when this was, probably when Stan started putting out the superhero books, and he needed more help. That's when he brought in people like Roy Thomas, and

I was still writing. Stan plotted those first stories and gave them to me to write, so I wrote the first Iron Man stories, the first Thor, Ant-Man, and so on. I also made up some of the names! Stan liked my character names, I was pretty good at that (*laughs*)!

ARNOLD: *Which characters did you name?*

LARRY: Well, I named Don Blake, who was Thor, and Iron Man [Tony Stark]. I also named Ant-Man—Henry "Hank" Pym—that was one of my favorites. I used to get the names from the back of the Webster's dictionary, from the geographical and biographical sections. If I had to make up a name for a guy who was, say, a Russian in one of the monster stories, I'd look through the lists of Russian towns. I enjoyed doing it. Stan used to say, "you make up good names!"

ARNOLD: *Other than alter ego names, did you make any other significant contributions to the development of Marvel's Silver Age superheroes?*

LARRY: Stan had Thor with his hammer, and I didn't want to keep saying 'the hammer' all the time, so I made up the name the "Uru" hammer. Where I got that from, I don't know. I wanted it short, so it would be less to letter. At any rate, Roy Thomas came and took over Thor a little while later. He came in one day with Bullfinch's Mythology and he said "Larry, where did you find the name "Uru hammer" in this book? And I had to tell him, "Roy, I didn't find it! I made it up!" (*laughs*) So he was astonished, and eventually he took the real name for the hammer [Mjolnir], but he told me he still used "Uru" too. [*Ed. Note: In later years, it was explained that "Uru" was the metal of which the hammer was forged.*]

ARNOLD: *Did you stay with the superhero comics?*

LARRY: No, I moved on to westerns. What might have happened is that Jack Kirby was doing the westerns, but now with the superheroes he may not have had the time or the interest, so there was an opening to draw the westerns. I wanted to get back to drawing, and so I worked on The Rawhide Kid, which I really enjoyed. The superhero stuff wasn't all to my taste. Stan was also developing a very personal writing style, but he never insisted or cared what style I wrote in. I was trying to emulate other writers, television people like Paddy Chayefsky and Rod Serling. They were my idols and I felt they wrote such good dialogue. So I wrote the westerns in my own way. I tried to write The Rawhide Kid like *High Noon*, serious with very little humor in it.

ARNOLD: *Did you have much direction on that title?*

LARRY: Since the westerns never sold that well, almost nobody cared about them, so it gave me a freedom to do what I wanted. I couldn't ruin it, as long as I wrote something decent, and if I wrote a masterpiece it wouldn't matter that much. I think I did it for seven years! I remember I had some trouble drawing the horses and the hats, and I remember coming into the office and John Romita said "We've got to get you a hat!" So I went to FAO Schwartz and got a hat and gun to look at. It helped (*laughs*).

ARNOLD: *Were you working much in the Marvel offices at that point?*

LARRY: When I was doing the monster books, I worked at home. At that time, Marvel was on 60th St. and Madison Ave. above Boyd's, a drug store. Later, they moved to 57th and Madison and they were above a bank. They were on the fifth floor, and Stan had a real office. That was where the bullpen was, and I was coming in to do some work there after The Rawhide Kid. I think I worked on a couple of *Spider-Man Annuals* with John Romita.

Marie Severin was also there… John Verpoorten, and Herb Trimpe too. Jack Kirby used to deliver stuff, and every day we'd look at what he was doing and he'd outdo himself every month. However spectacular Thor was the month before, the next month he did even more!

Incidentally, as impressed as we were with Jack, when John Buscema came in I couldn't believe it. He's a strong looking guy, he shook my hand and it hurt (*laughs*), and he could draw powerful stuff, but then he also drew the most delicate, beautiful women.

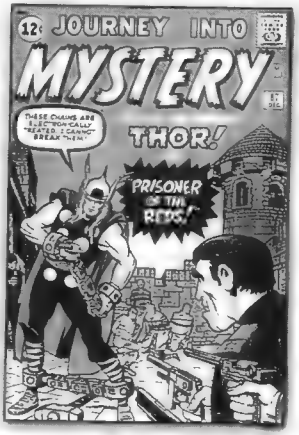
When I first met him, I said "I know your secret! You sold your soul to the devil, nobody draws that well who hasn't sold his soul to the devil!" and he laughed. When he first came in, he didn't have the power of Kirby, and then Stan showed him Kirby and two weeks later he was drawing with all the power of Kirby!

ARNOLD: *Was it a friendly atmosphere in the bullpen?*

LARRY: It was very warm and friendly, and very casual. I remember that Frank Giacoia, rest his soul, used to be there, and Sol Brodsky was the production man, and then other artists would come in and I would often work there.

FACING PAGE: **The ghost of Marvel monsters invaded Thor's first appearance in Journey Into Mystery #83 (Aug 1962), one of the great Larry Lieber-scripted origin issues**

Lieber hit his stride with the early sagas of Dr. Don Blake and his alter ego, Thor, in Marvel sci-fi classics such as "On the Trail of the Tomorrow Man!" from Journey Into Mystery #86 (Nov 1962)



Lieber pits Thor against the Commies in JIM #87 (Dec 1962)

ARNOLD: *Were you working on anything else during your run on The Rawhide Kid?*

No, it was all I could do to get The Rawhide Kid out . When I moved on, I didn't move on to anything so great. I was doing either a few inventory books or some covers, and along the line I started to draw in Kirby's style. I began to appreciate Jack even more while doing The Rawhide Kid. In fact, Jim Steranko came in one day and saw me drawing. I was doing a Kirby style cover, and Jim said "there's only one Jack Kirby, and that's Larry Lieber!" It was cute (*laughs*). But because I now knew how to draw in Jack's style, they could give me covers to do for the reprint books. Jack's style lends itself well to a cover, very exciting and dynamic.

ARNOLD: *Were you writing anything else at this point?*

LARRY: They were putting out some black and white books, like zombie stories, and I wrote some of those. Magazine management was also putting out a little four page story for one of the men's books called Pussycat. It was sort of a take-off on Little Annie Fanny. I started writing that for a while, maybe a year or so, and Jim Mooney was drawing it. It wasn't always easy to get work, oddly enough, and I was having a difficult time.

ARNOLD: *Was your working relationship with Stan less close than it had been during the late '50s and early '60s?*

LARRY: It was less close in that he didn't even bother to go over my westerns much. He trusted me and knew what I was doing, and they weren't that important. Then he moved on and became publisher, and Roy Thomas became editor. Other guys like Marv Wolfman and Len Wein were coming in, and I was just doing various things.

ARNOLD: *It was around this time that Marvel was sold and Martin Goodman left to form his own company.*

LARRY: Yes. When Martin Goodman started the new company [Atlas], he was going to put out black and white books like the kind Warren put out… and color comics. I left because I wasn't doing much for Marvel anyway, and I went over to this new company. I had no experience in black and white books—my work was in color comics—but, and I don't know why he did this, he picked me to be editor of the black and white books. He brought in a fellow named Jeff Rovin to be in charge of the

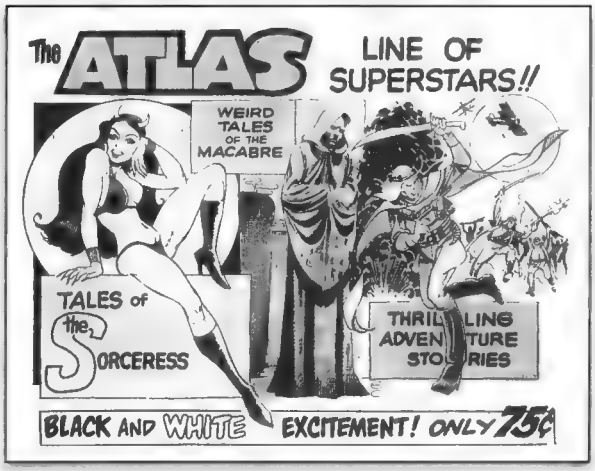
In its striking full-page house ad, Atlas proclaimed itself to be "The new house of ideas" an obvious reference to Lieber's Marvel roots

Thor strikes a classic pose in the last Lieber-scripted issue (JIM #91)

color comics, and it didn't work out well. When Jeff left, they gave me the color comics, but it was too late and Martin had lost too much money.

ARNOLD: *More and more comic fans are growing to appreciate the Atlas line, since it represented the early work for a lot of up-and-coming stars in comics at that time.*

LARRY: Oh yes, that could be. Some of them were old-timers too. I remember one guy, I won't even mention his name but I'm sure he's long gone, and they dredged him up to draw there. See, they couldn't get the top artists at that time, because they weren't going to get Kirby or Buscema, for example. The companies were keeping them. Rovin got the best artists he could who were available who weren't working for Marvel or DC, so the comics all had a different look, and he paid them all very big salaries.


The ATLAS LINE OF SUPERSTARS!!
WEIRD TALES OF THE MACABRE
TALES of the SORCERESS
THRILLING ADVENTURE STORIES
BLACK AND WHITE EXCITEMENT! ONLY 75¢

An Atlas house ad for of its B&W line of magazines

ARNOLD: *Was that part of the problem?*

LARRY: Yes it was. Rovin paid very big rates, and then when he left I had to reduce the rates, which wasn't too easy a task to do (*laughs*).

There was quite a mix of established creators and newcomers, including artists like Ditko, Howard Chaykin and Walt Simonson. I think Wally Wood was there also. I don't know that I ever felt the product was that good. I never thought of the magazines as having that much quality. They were different in a sense, but they weren't around that long. I remember I did a western called Kid Cody and Stan was a little upset—he thought it sounded too much like Kid Colt.

ARNOLD: *Did you ever feel like you were in the middle between Stan and Martin Goodman?*

LARRY: Not really, because I was so unimportant. If I had been in Roy Thomas' position—and I think Roy told me they wanted him to come over there, too—then I'd say I was caught in the middle, but I was sort of in the woodwork [at Marvel] then. I wasn't doing major books, just reprint covers.

ARNOLD: *Any bright spots in the Atlas experience?*

LARRY: There was one fellow there who was helpful to me, and I ought to mention his name. I don't know if he's still alive or if anybody has ever heard of him, but Russ Jones was an old-timer who had worked for Hammer Films in England. As a matter of fact, I never found out if it was true or not, but there were two names on the Hammer films you'll see, Jack Younger and John Elder, and he said both were him (*laughs*)!

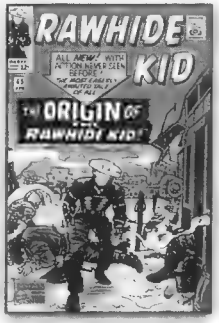
Russ saw me writing once—and I would struggle over my writing, too—and he said "I've seen a lot of writers work, but I've never seen anybody with as much integrity as you. You won't leave 'til you get that damn thing just right!"

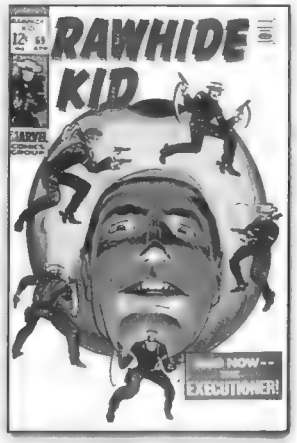
Russ helped me out in a difficult period, and he was also a jack of all trades. Sometimes, when I needed production done, and the production guy wouldn't work without directions from Rovin, I had Russ do it. He could letter and he also wrote. We even worked on *Son of Dracula*, that was a book we put out together. Eventually Russ moved to California, and I don't know what happened to him.

ARNOLD: *So how did the Atlas period come to a close?*

LARRY: Business was bad, and I remember I sometimes used to get anxiety attacks. One day they called me for jury duty near the end of the company's existence and I said, "are we going out of business?" So they said, "we don't know, we may go down." So one lunch-time at jury duty I called and the secretary said, "Chip [Martin's

Lieber Marvel western classics include Rawhide Kid #45 (Apr 1965) and #69 (Apr1969)





A sampler of Larry Lieber-edited Atlas comics from the Bronze Age

TOP ROW:
Demon-Hunter #1 (Sep 1975); **Weird Suspense #1** (Feb 1975); **Morlock 2001 #1** (Feb 1975)

MIDDLE ROW:
The Barbarians #1 (featuring Ironjaw, (Jun 1975); **Tales of Evil #3** (featuring Man-Monster, Jul 1975); **Wulf the Barbarian #2** (Apr 1975)

BOTTOM ROW:
The Brute #3 (Jul 1975); **The Destructor #1** (Feb 1975, script by Archie Goodwin, pencils by Steve Ditko, inks by Wally Wood); **Phoenix the Protector #4** (Oct 1975)

son] would like you to come in when you're off duty, he wants to talk to you." I hung up and figured this is it, we're going out of business.

So I start to get nervous, and I had to go back in the courtroom (*laughs*). I go back in and I'm standing there as a policeman is testifying, I don't know about what. I start to get so anxious, I was digging my nails in my hand hoping I wouldn't scream out and cause a mistrial!

Sure enough, when I went back they said, "Martin has lost too much money and his accountants have told him he has to go out of business." They gave me very nice severance pay and for a while I was trying some things, and then Stan offered me the chance to come back to Marvel and edit the British department, where they were doing mostly reprints with new covers, and one original strip, Captain Britain.

ARNOLD: *Looking back, did it ever bother you that perhaps you didn't achieve the same level of fame as those who are well-known for producing the classic "Marvel Age" of superheroes?*

LARRY: I wasn't as famous as the others, and maybe I missed it a little, I don't know, but the work itself didn't appeal to me quite that much. I would've had to be writing the superhero stuff, and I liked doing what I was doing.

Occasionally I would meet people who liked my stories, and that was always very gratifying to me. It meant a lot to me, it really did.

Larry Lieber's account of his illustrious career in comic book storytelling isn't finished, yet! Join us on the web at www.fanuniverse.com for the final part of this exclusive three-part interview. Larry talks about his work on the Incredible Hulk and Spider-Man newspaper strips in the closing installment, "Marvel's Mystery Man, Part III: A Daily Dose of Derring-Do" only available on the Web!

At the height of the Bronze Age, Editor Lieber's personal message to Atlas fans included a self-portrait, a reference to Jack Kirby and older brother Stan Lee, and mention of the first Thor, Iron Man, and Ant Man stories... three of Larry's historic contributions to the Marvel mythos

Here's What's Happenin' With ATLAS

A LETTER FROM **LARRY LIEBER**

They say that in the beginning was the word—but in my case, it was the **PICTURE** . . . for I was an artist before I became a writer.

Then, in 1958, I shifted gears and starting **WORDING** it for Marvel Comics . . . a not unlikely choice, considering that the editor was my *brother*. Some of you may have heard of him—his name is **STAN LEE.**

In those long ago, halcyon days, Stan plotted and scripted; I scripted; and a fellow named Jack Kirby just drew (about six pages a day).

Among my classic comic endeavors were the first **THOR**, the first **IRON MAN**, and the first **ANT MAN**. Thus, I gave to the world the name *Henry Pym* and a hammer called *Uru*. In return, the world gave me a chance to work with some of the most talented people in this industry . . . and none more so than Stan, himself (who taught me that *dialogue* is more important than *captions*, and *pay vouchers* are more important than either).

Then, for some forgettable reason, I left the world of superheroes and went **WEST**, young man . . . where I *plotted, scripted*, and *pencilled* **THE RAWHIDE KID** for a half-dozen years, pausing only to limn two **SPIDER-MAN ANNUALS**—which were aptly named, considering how *long* I took to limn them.

After *that* tour of duty, I reentered the twentieth century and pencilled some of Marvel's mightiest covers . . .

. . . until coming to work for **ATLAS**, where I now sit on the other side of the desk, breathing editorial life into this new major comics company.

But I'm lucky. Though the names have changed, the talent remains undiminished—as you'll discover for yourself when you read stories and view artwork by writers like **GARY FRIEDRICH** and illustrators such as **FRANK THORNE.**

I also have the good fortune to be employed by a publisher who's unafraid to roll up his sleeves. His name is **CHIP GOODMAN**, and for you aficionados of historical data, his *father* founded Marvel Comics way back when.

Last, but not least, I have an able editorial assistant, **DAVID KRAFT**, about whom you'll certainly be hearing more.

And now, to the overdue point of all this. Every comics company in this industry wants to give you, the reader, the **BEST WRITTEN** and **BEST ILLUSTRATED** stories possible. Here at **ATLAS**, our intent is no less.

I'm certain that we'll succeed! Just wait and see!

LARRY LIEBER
Editor

AaHEEE!
AaHHEEE!

Matt Baker, Arnold Drake and Graphic Novel No. 1

By Jeff Gelb

Will Eisner gets—and deserves—a ton of credit for a lifetime of outstanding contributions to comics. But while he is often regarded as the father of the Graphic Novel, with the 1978 publication of his "A Contract With God," he was actually scooped 35 years earlier! Taking nothing away from Eisner's accomplishment, veteran comics writer Arnold Drake reports having invented the form: "I called it a 'Picture Novel' when I created it in 1950."

Shockingly and undeservedly, comics historians have all but forgotten about *It Rhymes With Lust*. It's a 126-page comics story written by Arnold Drake and Les Waller, who used the pseudonym "Drake Waller," and illustrated by no less than Matt Baker, with Ray Osrin. The 5 ½" x 7 ⅜" book (*see color cover on page 81*) was published by Archer St. John of St. John comics, sold for 25¢, and carried a 1950 copyright.

HAL SWUNG THE BATTERED DOOR OF THE MINING SHACK OPEN, STEPPED INSIDE... AND THERE WAS RUST, LOOKING AS SEDUCTIVE AS EVER. HE HAD BEEN TELLING HIMSELF THAT THIS MEETING WAS TO BE BUSINESS — ALL BUSINESS.
H-HELLO, RUST. I... I...
CLOSE THE DOOR, PET. I WANT TO HEAR ABOUT THIS HOT SCOOP OF YOURS, FIRST.
I...WELL, THE GAMBLING JOINT'S AT CENTER AND OAK. ROULETTE, CHUCK-A-LUCK, EVERYTHING. I THOUGHT WE COULD SLIP A PHOTOGRAPHER IN THERE, GET PICTURES AND BREAK THE STORY WIDE OPEN.
WELL, REALLY, DARLING! AREN'T YOU GOING TO KISS ME?
OH, RUST, I..I.. DON'T THINK
I WAS WONDERING, PRECIOUS, JUST HOW LONG YOU'D REMAIN SO GRIM AND BUSINESSLIKE.

Drake recalls that it was his first comics assignment, though he had already written for the pulps and even radio shows, including "House of Mystery," long before it became a comic series. He partnered with "longtime buddy" and novelist Les Waller for the groundbreaking idea. "We wanted to do a series of classy 'B' movies in comic form, but looking like a book. I love a good B movie—*Charlie Chan*, things like that. We wanted them to be produced for people who never read a book. We felt that there was an audience out there that wasn't prepared to start reading novels, but might enjoy a new format. And it could be a bridge to reading books."

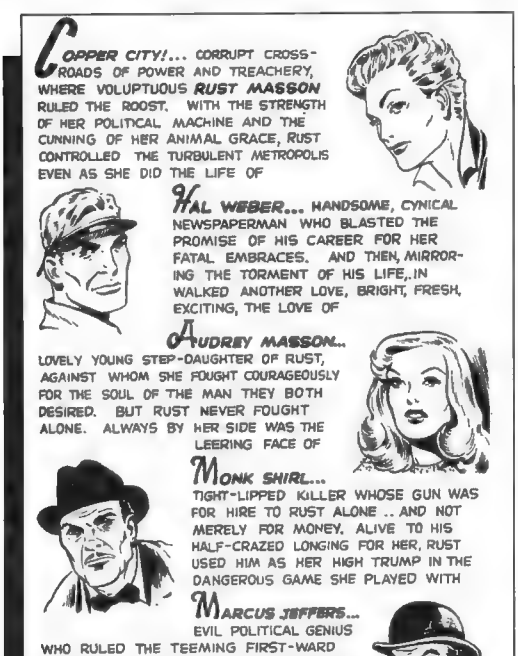
Graphic Novel No. 1

The intro page to It Rhymes with Lust introduces the reader to the citizens of Copper City... Hal Weber, Audrey Masson, Monk Shirl, Marcus Jeffers, and the character that "lust" rhymes with... Rust Masson

They took the idea to Archer St. John. Drake remembers, "He liked it but didn't know how it could be done. So I picked up a comic book he was publishing and folded it in half. And I said, "That's how you do it!"

"St. John chose Matt Baker, probably the first black artist to come into the mainstream of comics. I knew nothing about him at the time." When Drake saw the art, he recalls, " I was impressed. I knew that a good artist doing that many pages would cost a pretty good dollar. But Baker was very new and the doors weren't wide open to black people. So, in exchange for the opportunity, they probably got him at a very cheap price. I was certainly impressed by the quality we got."

And they got a real bargain. There's no telling exactly how Baker and Osrin shared the art chores, but most of the art is clearly Baker's, so perhaps Osrin inked or provided backgrounds and tones. In any case, it is a pure joy to look at the story panel-by-panel and note the maturity of Baker's understated art. Working in a real-world milieu, he gets to toy with fashions, architecture, furniture, and other things that his usual comics work never offered. What's better, he pulls it off magnificently, in page after page of anything from one to four panels of black and white bliss. This may, in fact, be Baker's best comics art ever; panel-by-panel, it is certainly his most consistent.


COPPER CITY!... CORRUPT CROSS-ROADS OF POWER AND TREACHERY, WHERE VOLUPTUOUS RUST MASSON RULED THE ROOST. WITH THE STRENGTH OF HER POLITICAL MACHINE AND THE CUNNING OF HER ANIMAL GRACE, RUST CONTROLLED THE TURBULENT METROPOLIS EVEN AS SHE DID THE LIFE OF
HAL WEBER... HANDSOME, CYNICAL NEWSPAPERMAN WHO BLASTED THE PROMISE OF HIS CAREER FOR HER FATAL EMBRACES. AND THEN, MIRRORING THE TORMENT OF HIS LIFE,.IN WALKED ANOTHER LOVE, BRIGHT, FRESH, EXCITING, THE LOVE OF
AUDREY MASSON... LOVELY YOUNG STEP-DAUGHTER OF RUST, AGAINST WHOM SHE FOUGHT COURAGEOUSLY FOR THE SOUL OF THE MAN THEY BOTH DESIRED. BUT RUST NEVER FOUGHT ALONE. ALWAYS BY HER SIDE WAS THE LEERING FACE OF
MONK SHIRL... TIGHT-LIPPED KILLER WHOSE GUN WAS FOR HIRE TO RUST ALONE .. AND NOT MERELY FOR MONEY. ALIVE TO HIS HALF-CRAZED LONGING FOR HER, RUST USED HIM AS HER HIGH TRUMP IN THE DANGEROUS GAME SHE PLAYED WITH
MARCUS JEFFERS... EVIL POLITICAL GENIUS WHO RULED THE TEEMING FIRST-WARD MACHINE AS HE WAITED HIS CHANCE TO INHERIT THE BURSTING TREASURE-CHEST THAT WAS... COPPER CITY!

One technique Baker obviously enjoyed in illustrating this book was the ability to switch panel sizes according to the dramatic needs of the storyline. Climaxes are always done as full, usually lefthand pages, so that readers are surprised as they flip the pages.

Baker also experimented with zip-a-tone shading throughout the story. Using zip-a-tone shading, the eye is naturally drawn to the center of each panel's action, in much the way that a movie camera blurs the focus of the background or foreground so that audiences see clearly only what the camera and director want them to see.

The effect is jarring at first, but after awhile it becomes quite appealing, and usually successful. I wonder just how expensive this technique was to use over the course of 126 pages of art. Surely Baker, sharing the artistic chores and wages with Ray Osrin, could not have fared well financially on this project, and yet it is stupendous. It's no surprise that the women in the book are gorgeous... but he proves to be equally impressive in depicting the men. The book is a sober reminder of the terrible loss Baker's early death was to the comics industry, and simultaneously a worthy monument to his skills.

As Drake suggests, the story does read like a good "B" movie. And as a fan of those, I consider that a compliment to the creative team. It plays like a Barbara Stanwyck or Joan Crawford vehicle, in which a tough woman controls a corrupt town, until a handsome newspaper reporter gets his hands on the biggest story of his career. Along the way, there's a kinky romantic triangle between the reporter (Hal Weber), Rust, the powerful woman, and Rust's stepdaughter (Audrey). There are also gangsters who want to control Rust and her town. There's even a labor dispute among the miners who make up the town's major industry.

The storyline has an immediate ring of familiarity, even if it's never been filmed in precisely that framework. As a vehicle for a graphic novel, it must have been an intriguing challenge for its creators, because the plot is character-driven, not action-oriented. Given that challenge, it works better than I expected, such that by the story's end I was rooting for the reporter and his long-suffering girl friend as they witnessed the defeat and death of Rusty Masson.

As for the book's clever title, the reporter says the line: "She named herself well... 'Rust.' Rust rhymes with lust. The mad lust for power that finally destroyed her."

As a lifetime comics reader in my late '40s, I found *It*

Rhymes With Lust to be very satisfying and unique. It's a well-written publication, especially considering that it was doubtless the first comics work for either Waller or Drake. It is distinctly adult in story, tone, themes and characterizations. And yet, amazingly, there is no nudity, no obscenities, and no "onscreen" violence. And ironically, perhaps, these are reasons why this bold experiment failed to find a longtime audience.

Logistically, there was another probable cause: where to sell this comic. Drake agrees: "I think that was its problem. They couldn't decide where to stock it… some with comics, some with magazines, some with pocket books. We realized that we were creating something new, and we recognized that was a problem."

"We don't know how it sold. It was killed because of the demise of the publisher, Archer St. John. His son took over the company and wasn't interested in the format." Drake adds, "I think if we had published in Spanish, it might have been a major hit." The ongoing success of Spanish digest comics, especially fumetti-style soap operas, adds credence to his opinion.

Drake and Waller had already plotted a second book. "We hadn't written anything down but we had ideas. There was a private eye character we were going to try and establish as a series." Alas, that was not to be. Instead, according to Drake, "Les did a number of novels and went on to do PR for the banking industry in New York state for a number of years. When he left there, he wrote a book called *The Banker*."

Drake, of course, went on to become a chief scribe for DC, working with the company for several decades on numerous titles, most notably *Doom Patrol* and *Deadman*.

While much of Drake's comics work has been reprinted, *It Rhymes With Lust* has not seen the light of day since 1950. Drake believes ten or less copies exist today. I paid over $100 several years ago for my FR copy and consider it a major bargain. I know of only two other copies, aside from Drake's own—one in the collection of a comics artist/writer who found it in a used bookstore for $6 (the lucky dog!), and a GD/VG copy that recently exchanged hands for 4x *Guide*. Certainly it is very rare, with *Overstreet* listing it at $400 in NM. I have serious doubts that many more copies will surface. In any case, the book is ripe for reprinting, though Drake admits he doesn't know who owns the rights, if anyone. I'd pay a premium to have a pristine copy of this book in a reprinted form! Hey, hip comics publishers, are you listening?

RUST, MARCUS, THE MASSON EMPIRE AND EVEN EMPIRE CITY VANISHED INTO THE UNIMPORTANT DISTANCE AS HAL SWEPT AUDREY INTO HIS ARMS AND THEIR LIPS MET. THE TOWER TOLLED OUT THE HOUR AS COPPER CITY SETTLED DOWN TO A NIGHT OF PEACE AND PROMISE. TO HAL AND AUDREY THE CHIMES SOUNDED FOR ALL THE WORLD LIKE WEDDING BELLS.

MASSON MINES INC.
COURTESY IN BU
YOU'RE A SLAVE! A SLAVE TO A BOTTLE AND A WOMAN. AND I DON'T CARE WHICH ONE KILLS YOU FIRST!
AUDREY! WAIT!

Stunning full-page panels, like these and the action-scene on page 54, are used by Matt Baker and Ray Osrin throughout the pioneering and rare 128-page graphic novel

SEE INSIDE BACK COVER

So is it really the world's first true graphic novel? Comics scholars may debate this endlessly, that is, if they can ever even find the book. I say yes. And in any case, nearly 50 years after Drake helped to usher in graphics comic storytelling, it's a testament to his talents, (and those of Waller, Baker, and Osrin) that *It Rhymes With Lust* remains one of the peaks of this genre of storytelling. It's a real bravura effort for all involved, and a great comics reading experience.

Showcase!

Continued from page 27

Back in the real world, the impact was no less significant; the success of the Flash allowed for the reintroduction of other Golden Age greats, as well as the eventual debut of completely new characters and the Silver Age superhero revival.

This is not to imply that the effect of the Flash was immediate. The purpose of *Showcase* was to allow DC to test the waters for new ideas before committing to a series. The Flash would return in issue #8 (June, 1957)—introducing Captain Cold, #13 (April, 1958)—with Mr. Element, and #14 (June, 1958)—versus Dr. Alchemy… formerly Mr. Element!, before graduating to his own title, which was actually picking up his predecessor's series from where it left off. These issues featured stories by Kanigher and Broome, as well as art primarily by Infantino, whose unique visual elements would come to be closely associated with The Flash.

The king of the Seven Seas and the Tiny Titan debuted in back-to-back tryout sequences… Aquaman in Showcase #30-34 (#30 below) and the Atom in Showcase #34-36 (#34 below right)

Following the Flash's debut in issue #4, and the retreat back to "Manhunters" for the following issue, *Showcase* #6 (February, 1957) once again introduced a headliner of the Silver Age, Jack Kirby's Challengers of the Unknown. Considering the number of characters created by Kirby in his decades-long career, as well as the number of characters introduced in *Showcase*, it is noteworthy that the Challengers are the only Kirby creations to debut in the *Showcase*'s run.

The Challs' origin was featured in *Showcase* #6, along with their first recorded mission for the mysterious Morelian. Ace Morgan, Red Ryan, Rocky Davis, and Prof Haley were four men "living on borrowed time" after walking away from a plane crash. It is easy to see elements of the Challengers which Kirby would reuse four years later in Marvel's Fantastic Four: a team with a common origin and matching uniforms, public identities, and a rocket crash for the plane crash. It's also easy to see a prototype Ben Grimm in Rocky and Reed Richards in Prof. Except for the addition of powers and the gender change of one of its members, the two teams are very similar.

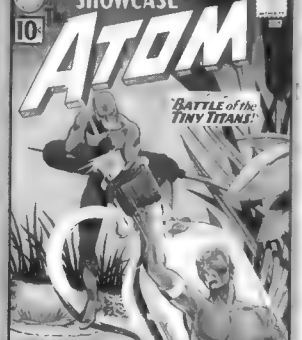
The Challs returned in issue #7 (April, 1957—introducing Ultivac), #11 (December, 1957)—where, with classic Silver Age disregard for continuity, Prof Haley is called Prof Harrison, and #12 (February, 1958), before receiving their own series in May 1958. *The Challengers of the Unknown* had a respectable 80 issue run, stalling out several times in the early '70s before going on hiatus in 1973. Four years later it returned for another seven issues, followed by a 1991 miniseries revamp and a new team and title in 1997. The Challengers, for all their simplicity, are a significant piece of Silver Age history.

The next character to headline in *Showcase* #9 and 10, (August and October, 1957), was actually a long-time supporting character—Superman's Girl Friend, Lois Lane. In her first solo outing, Lois met "Superman's ex—Lana Lang," from his days as Superboy. Later stories would show the two meeting as teens, an incident apparently forgotten by all parties involved. This set the scene for the long-running Lois-Lana feud. There was also a primitive ancestor of the Imaginary Story in that first *Showcase* Lois Lane collection. Granted, "Mrs. Superman" was only a dream, but tales of Lois and Clark's married life and offspring, as well as other variations fans were not likely to see in regular continuity, were to become a staple of the Superman family of books in the 1960s.

The first character to win a series from *Showcase* was not Flash, nor the Challengers but Lois Lane. After only two *Showcase* appearances, combined, of course, with her soaring popularity on the *Superman* TV show, *Superman's Girl Friend, Lois Lane* debuted in March, 1958, a month before *Challengers* #1 and almost a full year before *Flash* #105. Lois had her own title for 137 issues, before being folded, in 1974, with *Superman's Pal, Jimmy Olsen* and *Supergirl* into the combined *Superman Family*, which retained the numbering of *Jimmy Olsen*. Lois also had her own 1986 miniseries. She continues to be an important piece of Superman comics today, having finally become "Mrs. Superman," and receiving top-billing over the Man of Steel on the television program *Lois and Clark: The New Adventures of Superman*.

Showcase #15 and 16 (August, 1958 and October, 1958, respectively) introduced another new character, although one that was not des-

DC
SHOWCASE presents
AQUAMAN
AND AQUALAD
The CREATURES from ATLANTIS!
A 3-PART NOVEL, INCLUDING
The ORIGIN of AQUAMAN!
10¢
I MUST! THE FATE OF ATLANTIS AND THE FATE OF OUR WORLD IS AT STAKE!
NO, NO AQUAMAN! YOU CAN'T ATTACK THOSE WEIRD CREATURES SINGLE-HANDED!



tined for long-range stardom. Space Ranger was an unremarkable, generic spaceman of the 22nd century. The covers of those issues promised the "amazing interplanetary adventures of a bold new hero of the future." Space Ranger was perhaps less enthralling than DC other sci-fi heroes Tommy Tomorrow and Adam Strange… but he and Cryll, his shapechanging interplanetary sidekick, were very popular among younger readers. Space Ranger had a glorious run in *Tales Of The Unexpected* beginning with #40—the painted cover of the highly collectible *Unexpected* # 43 is considered a Silver Age classic—and a not-so-glorious reworking in *Mystery in Space*. Space Ranger co-starred in the *Showcase* hundredth issue gala, but has been seen little since. As of this writing, Space Ranger has just appeared, along with the second-string Ultra, the Multi-Alien, in an issue of *Starman*.

The next three issues (#17-19; December, 1958 and February, and April, 1959) featured Adam Strange, "Earth's First Spaceman." Adam Strange was kind of a reverse Superman, an Earthman as hero on a technologically advanced foreign planet. His stories were written by Gardner Fox, with art by Mike Sekowsky and Bernard Sachs, plus wonderful Gil Kane covers.

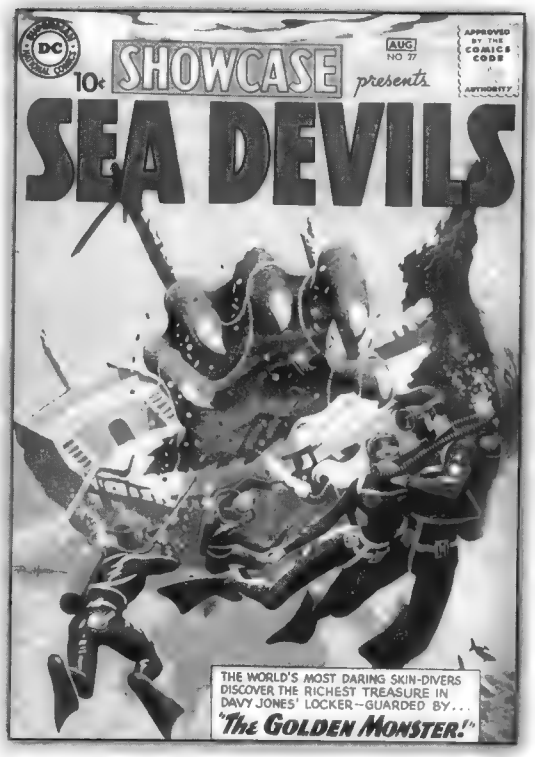
Issues #17 and 18 were billed as "Adventures on Other Worlds," with Adam finally taking cover billing via the logo, for his third *Showcase* appearance. Adam Strange became a DC mainstay of the Silver Age, starring in *Mystery in Space* and, later, *Strange Adventures* (not originally an eponymous title). He was popular enough to earn crossovers with Hawkman, the Justice League, and even Space Ranger! Adam continues to appear in DC titles to this day.

The next two issues featured (#20 and 21—June, and August, 1959, respectively) Rip Hunter… Time Master. The first appearance showed Rip and his crew as "Prisoners of 100 Million B.C.," while the next issue found them in the era of Ancient Greece on the Island of Circe. With such exotic locales at their disposal, it is small wonder that they were invited back for *Showcase* #25 (April, 1960) and #26 (June, 1960)—these latter appearances drawn by the great Joe Kubert.

Rip earned his own title, *Rip Hunter… Time Master*, which lasted 29 issues, from March, 1961 until December, 1965. A post-Crisis Rip was revamped in the 1990 mini-series, *Time Masters*. Today Rip appears as Hunter of DC's Linear Men.

Another Silver Age superstar recycled from comics' Golden Age was born in *Showcase* #22 (October, 1959) and continued in the following two issues (December, 1959 and February, 1960). I speak of Green Lantern, masterfully rendered by Gil Kane. As with the Flash, a new costume, alter ego and origin were devised, this version of GL being steeped in science rather than the magic of his predecessor.

Green Lantern didn't have to wait as long as Flash to obtain his own series; *Green Lantern* debuted in August, 1960 and lasted 224 issues, including 19 as *Green Lantern Corps*, until May, 1988. A second *Green Lantern* series was launched in June, 1990 and is running currently.



Russ Heath's incredible underwater panorama on the cover of Showcase #27 (the premiere of the Sea Devils) holds up as a Silver Age masterpiece four decades after its publication

Issues #27-33 featured a seven-issue run of deep sea adventures in the form of three issues of Sea Devils and four issues of Aquaman. The Sea Devils (*Showcase* #27-29, August, October, and December, 1960), led by Dane Dorrance, were a non-superpowered team of divers, sort of like the Challengers of the Unknown… underwater. The Sea Devils' *Showcase* run included some breathtaking covers by Russ Heath. DC's premier scuba team earned their own title beginning in September, 1961, and lasting 35 issues until June, 1967.

The Aquaman run in *Showcase* (#30, featuring his origin, through #33; February, April, June, and August, 1961, respectively) was different from other Golden Age character relaunches. First of all, the Silver Age version was nearly identical to his Golden Age counterpart, except for his origin. Secondly, he wasn't revived in the pages of *Showcase*; Aquaman tales had been running in *Adventure* and he was already a member of the Justice League of America, which debuted in *Brave & Bold* #28 (March, 1960). The purpose of Aquaman's stint in *Showcase* was apparently to test the

Showcase!

(ahem) waters for his own title.

If so, Aquaman's shot as a headliner in *Showcase* must have been successful, as he was shortly thereafter awarded his own title. *Aquaman* ran for 63 issues, from February, 1962 until September, 1978, with a six-year hiatus between issue #56 in April, 1971 and #57 in August, 1977. There were also two Aquaman miniseries, and presently there is a third ongoing series. There were also two miniseries of the same name.

Another revival of a Justice Society member occurred in the following three issues (#34-36; October and December, 1961 and February, 1962), which featured the Atom who, like Green Lantern, was rendered by Gil Kane. Unlike Flash and Green Lantern, who had essentially the same abilities as their predecessors, the Atom went his Golden Age namesake more than one better.

The original Atom was merely a shorter than average fellow who worked out; the Silver Age version was a scientist who perfected a means of reducing his size and mass. The Golden Age Atom inadvertently broke doorknobs; the new version could travel over telephone lines. This was a significantly different character.

G.I. Joe's "2nd Blazing Battle Book!" Showcase #54 (Feb 1965) features one of the lesser-known but still stunning Heath war covers. The two G.I. Joe Showcase tryouts never landed the character a DC series

The Atom's first series ran 45 issues from July, 1962 until November, 1969. The first 38 issues were titled simply, *The Atom*, while the final seven were *The Atom and Hawkman* (following the cancellation of the winged wonder's own series in September, 1968).

Further pillar of DC's Silver Age was introduced in *Showcase* #37 (April, 1962), with repeat appearances in the three issues that follow (June, August and October, 1962). The Metal Men were a half-dozen human-like robots who had the abilities and suppose temperament) of the metals from which they were constructed—Iron, Lead, Tin, Platinum, Gold, and Mercury. Their designer and team leader was Dr. Will Magnus (who, when they disagreed, became Magnus... Robot Fighter! No, just kidding. But that illustrious Gold Key title did not appear until ten months after this Magnus and his robots appeared.)

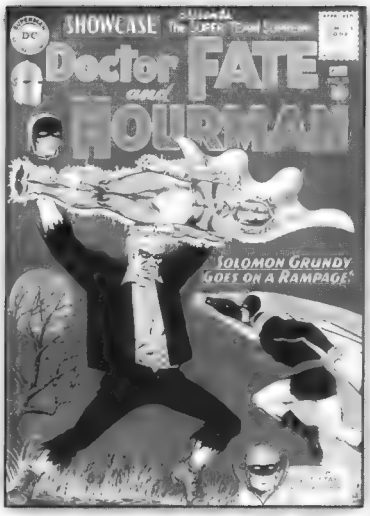
Their own title, *Metal Men*, began in May, 1963 and ran 41 issues until it went on hiatus in December, 1969. It returned for three reprint issues in 1973, only to stall out again. It was begun again with #45 in May, 1976 and ran until #56 in March 1978 before fizzling out for good. The Metal Men's origin received a post-Crisis tweak in their 1993-1994 mini-series.

An interesting side-note should be mentioned here. In the past, many collectors felt that the "most collectible" era of *Showcase*—the title's "Golden Age" as it were—were issues #1-38! Several snobbish fanzine articles as well as the collector network of the time often downplayed the importance of *Showcase* issues after #38, and as a consequence, many collections ended with that issue. Over the years an inordinate number of first-owner collections came to market that were prematurely truncated right in the middle of the Metal Men tryouts. Hobbyists that began collecting the title during the 1970s and beyond made no such distinction... avidly seeking out and appreciating many of the classic *Showcase* issues that followed #38. But there are still a few longtime collectors who steadfastly decline to even look at post #38 *Showcase*, no doubt as an aftermath of this early fandom dogma.

After the Metal Men!

Yet another spaceman feature from the future, Tommy Tomorrow and the Planeteers, burst onto the scene in *Showcase* #41 (December, 1962). He returned in the following issue (February, 1963), as well as #44, 46, and 47 (June, October, and December, 1963).

Unlike many *Showcase* stars, this was not the first appearance of Tommy Tomorrow. Like Aquaman, Tomorrow actually dates back to the Golden Age—to a DC title called *Real Fact Comics* (specifically issues #6, 8, 13, and 16). He also ran in *Action Comics* starting with #127 (December 1948) and lasting until #251(April, 1959) and in *World's Finest* #102 through #124 (March, 1962). Tommy Tomorrow never had his own title.



Two Gardner Fox and Murphy Anderson extravaganzas... Showcase #55 (featuring the first Silver Age appearance of the Golden Age Green Lantern) and #56

Tommy's run in *Showcase* was interrupted twice. The first time (issue #43; April, 1963) was for an event unique in *Showcase*'s run. It was a movie adaptation. Specifically, it was an adaptation of Ian Fleming's James Bond in *Dr. No*. This was actually a reprint of a story that ran in a European edition of *Classics Illustrated*, cleaned up to be more "politically correct."

This issue is generally credited with being the first DC Silver Age movie adaptation, but that is not accurate. *The Adventures of Jerry Lewis* #74 (January, 1963) edges out *Showcase* #43 by several months. This should not take away from the significance of *Showcase* #43, which is probably the only DC appearance of James Bond, whose films have also been adapted by Marvel, Dark Horse, Eclipse, and Topps.

The other interruption in Tommy Tomorrow's five-issue run occurred in *Showcase* #45 (August, 1963), which featured Sgt. Rock of Easy Company by (who else?) Kubert. Rock made his debut in *Our Army At War* #83 (June, 1959), following several prototype tryouts in two previous issues. After his *Showcase* appearance, Rock went on to appear, with DC's other war heroes in *Brave & Bold* #52 (February, 1964), and to continue his run in *Our Army at War*, which was renamed *Sgt. Rock* with its 302nd issue (March, 1977). Sgt. Rock was canceled in July, 1988 with #422, but continued in a series of specials featuring Kubert reprints which ran for 21 quarterly issues beginning in October 1988.

The next few months continued to feature characters who were not being introduced by their *Showcase* appearances, merely spotlighted for potential series. *Showcase* #48, 49, and 52 (February, April, and October, 1964) featured Cave Carson and his adventures inside Earth. Geologist Cave Carson and his crew were to spelunking what the Sea Devils were to swimming.

Cave and company actually had not one, but two previous tryouts in the pages of *Brave & Bold* (in issues #31-33, September-November, 1960, and January, 1961; and #40-41, March and May, 1962). Carson was not destined for greatness, but, if nothing else, has demonstrated staying power as a member of DC's "Forgotten Heroes."

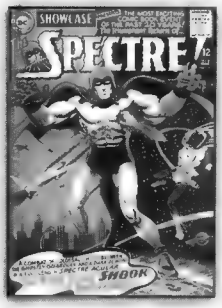
"I—Spy" took the center stage in *Showcase* #50-51 (June and August, 1964, respectively). These issues were by Murphy Anderson and Carmine Infantino and contained a fair amount of reprint material. The central character was the oddly-named King Faraday, formerly of the 1950's comic *Danger Trail*.

Another unique feature appeared in *Showcase* #53 and 54 (December, 1964 and February, 1965). "G.I. Joe" featured generic war stories, mostly reprint material, except possibly for a framing sequence, with tenuous connections to the popular toy of the same name. A G.I. Joe comic never appeared; the closest DC would come would be five issues named for G.I. Joe's toy-shelf rival, *Captain Action*, in 1968-69. G.I. Joe would not receive its own comic (aside from promotional giveaways) until Marvel's 155-issue series began in 1982, based not upon the 12" doll, but upon the 3" "action figure." (Like Tarzan, Star Trek, and Doc Savage, this makes G.I. Joe one of the few properties licensed by both Marvel and DC.)

Dr. Fate and Hourman appeared in the highly sought-after *Showcase* #55 and 56 (April and June, 1965) with Gardner Fox stories and Anderson art. By this time, the Silver Age was well under way, the Justice Society had reappeared and been established on Earth-2, and DC, for some reason, stopped remaking their classic characters (a trend they have recently resumed with a new Starman, Hourman, Dr. Midnite, etc.). The result was that these were not new versions of classic characters, but a revival of the Golden Age greats themselves.

The same thing occurred over in *Brave & Bold* with the team of Black Canary and Starman—in *B&B* #61 and 62 (September and November 1965). These collectible issues also featured guest appearances by other Golden Age heroes and villains such as Green Lantern, Solomon Grundy, and a new Psycho Pirate (in *Showcase*), the Huntress, Wildcat, and the Mist (in *Brave & Bold*).

Carmine Infantino art is the highlight of the two I-Spy Showcase issues



Neither of these teams resulted in a new title. Only one Earth-2 character, whom I'll come to later, was awarded a separate series before DC renewed *All-Star Comics* in February 1976. At that point, oddly, DC began *All-Star* with #58, where it left off, even though its numbering had already been assigned to *All-Star Western* in 1951. A new Dr. Fate did receive his own series which ran 41 issues beginning in 1988, following a four-issue miniseries a year earlier; a new Hourman is currently enjoying his own book.

Another war title was featured in *Showcase* #57 and 58 (August and October, 1965), although it was different from most other DC war comics. Yes, it still featured art by the master of the genre, Joe Kubert, but there were two significant differences: (1) it was placed in World War I, rather than the more common World War II and (2) the star was a member of the opposition. Hans von Hammer a.k.a. Enemy Ace first appeared in *Our Army at War* #151 (February, 1965), returning in #153 (April, 1965) and #155 (June, 1965), before relocating to *Showcase*.

Following his *Showcase* appearances, Enemy Ace enjoyed a respectable run in *Star Spangled War Stories*, beginning with issue #168 (May, 1968).

The Teen Titans appeared in only one issue of *Showcase*, issue #59 (December, 1965). Another feature originating in *Brave & Bold* (in *B&B* #54—July, 1964—as the team up of Robin, Kid Flash, and Aqualad and again in #60—July, 1965—with the addition of Wonder Girl to form the Titans proper), the Titans moved from *Showcase* to their own series beginning in February, 1966.

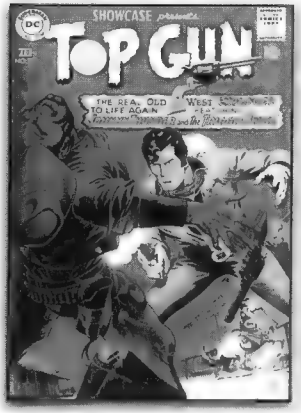
Teen Titans ran 43 issues until its hiatus in February, 1973; it returned for ten more issues, from November, 1976 to its cancellation in February, 1978. The *New Teen Titans* began in November, 1980 and quickly became one of the most popular books of the decade. *New Teen Titans* became *Tales of the Teen Titans* with issue #41 (April, 1984) and continued until #91 (July, 1988). A second *New Teen Titans* title was launched in August, 1984, becoming *The New Titans* with #50, December, 1988. This title lasted until #130 (February, 1996). (An explanation of the two concurrent titles would require a thorough review of DC's "hardcover/softcover" experiment of the 1980s.) Other groups of Titans had books such as *Team Titans* and another *Teen Titans* title (24 issues each, from September, 1992-September, 1994 and October, 1996-September, 1998, respectively). The original members are back in a current series simply titled, *The Titans*.

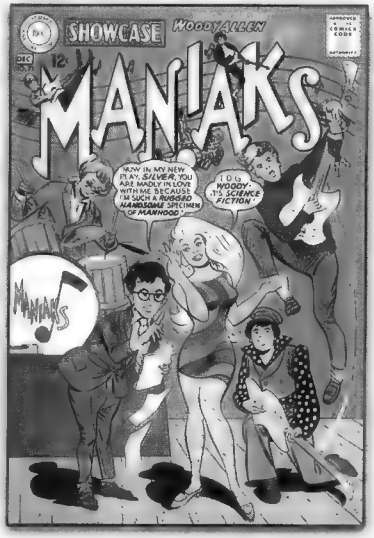
Spectre... missing for 20 years!

The Spectre by Fox and Anderson appeared in *Showcase* #60 and 61, and again in #64 (February, April, and October 1966). Unlike the earlier Dr. Fate/Hourman stories, these made no reference to the Spectre's Earth-2 home or Justice Society membership, except on the text page, only indicating that he had been missing for 20 years. There were no guest appearances from other Golden Age characters and no pseudo-scientific explanation of the DC multiverse. This approach probably made the Spectre a little more accessible to the average reader. And the stories were a nice mix of superheroics and the supernatural.

The Spectre was the only Earth-2 hero to earn his own title, though he might as well have been the Spectre of Earth-1 for all the difference that made. His title ran ten issues, from December, 1967 until June, 1969. Subsequent *Spectre* series lasted 31 issues beginning in April, 1987 and 62 issues starting in December, 1992. Many collectors feel that the best Spectre stories, however, are probably from Jim Aparo's run in

Showcase #72 (Feb 1968) featured retread Western tales. Showcase #71 (Dec 1967), the last tryout for the Maniaks, featured Woody Allen in his only (?) comic book appearance




SHOWCASE
WOODY ALLEN
MANIAKS
NOW IN MY NEW PLAY, SILVER, YOU ARE MADLY IN LOVE WITH ME BECAUSE I'M SUCH A RUGGED HANDSOME SPECIMEN OF MANHOOD!
I DIG WOODY... IT'S SCIENCE FICTION!
MANIAKS

Adventure (beginning with #431 in February, 1974).

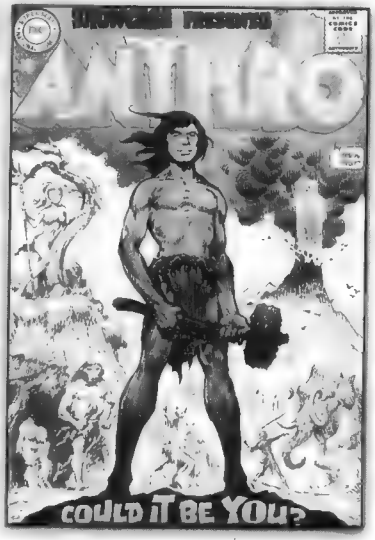
Showcase #62, 63 and 65 (June, August and December, 1966) interrupted the Spectre's flow for another "something completely different." The Inferior Five were DC's first attempt at a "next generation" of heroes. Years before the children of the Justice Society would band together as Infinity, Inc., the offspring of the never-before-heard-of Freedom Brigade would have glory forcibly thrust upon them as the modestly-monickered Inferior Five. Written by E. Nelson Bridwell, with appropriately cartoony art by Joe Orlando and Mike Esposito, the Inferior Five were weak leader Merryman, clumsy strong man Awkwardman, cowardly archer White Feather, obese (and slow) flyer the Blimp, and dimwitted femme fatale Dumb Bunny. Their first *Showcase* appearance featured their origin; their second and third began what they were soon famous for—fighting (and accidentally defeating) parodies of Marvel's superheroes.

The Inferior Five were awarded a title that ran 12 issues, from April, 1967 until November, 1972. The I5 have a habit of popping up where you least expect it—in Captain Carrot, in Animal Man, and in the *Angel and the Ape* miniseries, for example. We can only hope that someday the powers that be at DC will give us a new I5 for a new millennium. (In case you haven't figured it out, I really liked this book.)

Showcase #66-67 (February and April, 1967) produced what is, after Brother Power, the lamest character of the 1960s—B'wana Beast. "Great White Hunter" Mike Maxwell, clad in a loincloth, and provided with a potion and helmet by a Djuba the gorilla—you've got to love Silver Age DC monkeys!—could not only control animals, he could merge them into "amalgams." B'wana Beast gets out occasionally, Animal Man, *Swamp Thing Annual*, et al, but no series.

The next two issues (#68-69, June and August, 1967) featured The Maniaks, sort of a comic book version of the Monkees. In their very first panel, the Maniaks are shown singing "Take the last train to Knoxville…" The Maniaks were a quirky quartet with a penchant for ending up in trouble. Jangle could do any voice or sound effect, Silver was a miser, Pack Rat lived up to his name, and Flip was the acrobat. The villains in that first appearance have names like "Shrimp" Creole, "Noodles" Romanoff, and "Oysters" Rockefeller, among many others. By Bridwell, Esposito, and Sekowsky, this series was similar to the Inferior Five in both style and tone.

The significant appearance of the Maniaks was in *Showcase* #71 (December, 1967) which featured the first and, to my knowledge, only comic book appearance of Woody Allen. I'm surprised that this issue doesn't command any higher price than the others, as real-life guest star appearances usually do. Despite this blockbuster occurrence, the Maniaks failed to score their own title.



Showcase #66 (above left) and #67 (Feb and Apr, 1967) starred B'wana Beast who could not only control animals, but could merge them into "amalgams"

Anthro the cave boy, by Howie Post, took center stage in Showcase #74 (May, 1968). The cover bears the odd question, "Could it be you?"

The interruption between Maniaks issues (*Showcase* #70, October, 1967) was filled by Binky, an unremarkable Archie clone. Binky did earn his own series—or two, depending on how you look at it. Actually, Binky already had a long-running series, *Leave it to Binky*, later just *Binky*, which lasted 82 issues, from 1948 to 1958, went on hiatus for a decade, then returned from 1968 to 1977. *Binky's Buddies* (the latter issues considered some of the rarer Bronze Age titles) lasted 12 issues, from January 1969 to November 1970.

Showcase #72 (February, 1968) featured "Top Gun"—no, not the movie, but retread Western tales featuring the Trigger Twins and Johnny Thunder (the cowboy, not his Justice Society namesake). Both headliners were late of *All-Star Western*. There was also a third feature, not credited on the cover, "Epics of the Texas Rangers." Each of the title's stars would briefly own a reprint title in 1973: *Johnny Thunder* lasting three issues and *The Trigger Twins* lasting but one.

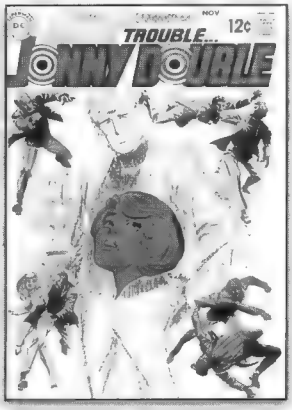
The next issue was a brief high point in terms of significance, following a number of disappointments. After early issues introducing the likes of the Flash, the Challengers, Green Lantern, and the Atom, there were no more real superstars. Remember, many characters such as the Spectre and the Teen Titans did not begin in the pages of *Showcase*. Then, in *Showcase* #73 (April, 1968), we were told to "Beware The Creeper." This beautiful Ditko masterpiece, one of his only *Showcase* contributions, was billed on the cover as "The First Smash Hit of '68!" and in creative terms that was true. The Creeper was about as atypical as a DC hero could get in those

Showcase!

days, being far more weird and disturbing than the usual spandex crew. But as far as sales figures....

Beware The Creeper lasted only six issues, from June, 1968 until April, 1969. The Creeper, however, was never far away, popping up in *JLA* and *Brave & Bold*, among other titles, from time to time. He earned another tryout, in *First Issue Special* in 1975, but failed to secure another series. A second *Creeper* series finally materialized in 1997, lasting 12 issues until #1,000,000 in November, 1998. (Yes, that number is one million. You have to love DC's "special events" sometimes.)

Anthro the cave boy, by Howie Post, took center stage for *Showcase* #74 (May, 1968). Anthro was more advanced intellectually and emotionally and physically than his ape-like father. The storyline is played straight, although their ignorant caveman ways border on slapstick. The cover bears the odd question, "Could it be you?" I can understand how I might turn out to be Kamandi, the Last Boy on Earth, but I cannot fathom how I could be Anthro, except perhaps in a previous life. Very strange. In any event, the series *Anthro* lasted six issues in 1968-69.



In Showcase #73 (Apr 1968), we were told to "Beware The Creeper" a beautiful Ditko masterpiece (one of only two Showcase contributions). Creeper was billed as "The First Smash Hit of '68!"

Ditko's other *Showcase* creation, the Hawk and the Dove, debuted in issue #75 (June, 1968). Another pair of atypical heroes, Hank (Hawk) and Don (Dove) Hall represented philosophical extremes of force and pacifism, appropriate for the late 1960s. Not surprisingly, following Steve Ditko's Creeper, they are the last significant creation of the *Showcase* title. The series *The Hawk and the Dove* lasted, like *Beware the Creeper* and *Anthro*, but six short issues in 1968-1969. They also appeared in *Teen Titans*.

A second series, *Hawk and Dove* (without the "the"s) featuring the same Hawk and a different Dove, lasted longer... 28 issues from 1989-1991, following a five-issue miniseries—with Rob Liefeld art—in 1988-89. A third *Hawk and Dove*, with yet a different Hawk another Dove, had a five-issue miniseries in 1997-98. The original Dove was killed in the Crisis, while Hawk became the villain Monarch, later Extant.

Showcase returned to the old West with issue #76 (August, 1968), but with a twist. Bat Lash was anything but a typical gunslinger. A fun-loving womanizer with a flower in his hat, Bat would rather make love than war. The cover acknowledged his unusual style by asking "Will he save the West-or ruin it?" *Bat Lash*, a Western for people who don't necessarily like Westerns, ran seven issues in 1968-1969.

A DC monkey of the late '60s (you gotta love 'em!) got his start in *Showcase* #77 (September, 1968). Angel and the Ape was the story of a beautiful but dumb girl detective (Angel O'Day) and her partner, an intelligent ape and aspiring cartoonist (Sam Simeon). Their series, *Angel and the Ape*, like *Bat Lash*, lasted seven issues in 1968-69. There was also an *Angel and the Ape* four-issue miniseries (by Phil Foglio) in 1991.

Detective Jonny Double, who first appeared in *Showcase* #78 (November, 1968), would not earn a series of his own until his four-issue Vertigo miniseries in 1998. A rather undistinguished detective strip, he had moderate success as a second-stringer, teaming with Supergirl against Batman's foe, Dr. Tzin-Tzin, and accompanying Wonder Woman and Catwoman on an adventure in Nehwon with Leiber's Fafhrd and Gray Mouser.

Dolphin, by J. Scott Pike, starred in *Showcase* #79 (December, 1968). Dolphin was an Aquaman wannabe with limited language skills and of unknown origin. Aside from having one of the most unusual and beautiful covers of the series, there is nothing remarkable about this issue. Dolphin doesn't even carry the whole book; an Aquaman reprint appears as backup. (Aqualad's origin, in case you ever wanted to read it but didn't know where to look.) Dolphin never had her own title, but she did appear as one of the Forgotten Heroes and now appears regularly in Aquaman.

Next up was the Phantom Stranger in *Showcase* #80 (February, 1969). The Stranger was a horror/mystery character from a short-lived series in 1952-53. Sometimes host to a story, sometimes a player, the Phantom Stranger's *Showcase* appearance earned him a second series which lasted 41 issues, from June, 1969 to March, 1976. He also starred in a 1987 miniseries and a Vertigo one-shot.

Detective Jonny Double, who first appeared in Showcase #78 (Nov 1968), would not earn a series of his own until his four-issue Vertigo miniseries in 1998

Showcase #81 (March, 1969) featured Windy and Willy. These were really just old stories from DC's late, not terribly lamented, *Many Loves of Dobie Gillis* adaptation, retouched to turn beatniks into hippies. The most noteworthy thing about it was that Maynard G. Krebs finally got top billing. *Windy and Willy* became a four-issue (reprint) series in 1969.

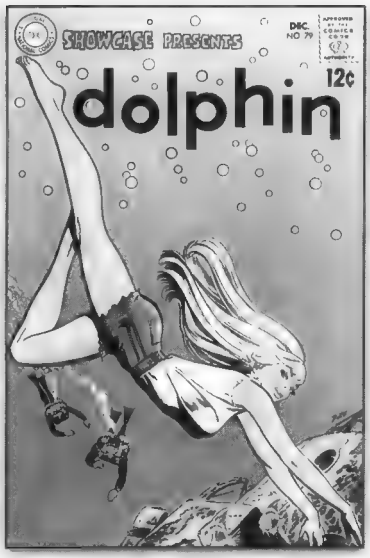
The next three issues (#82-84; May, June, and August, 1969) featured Nightmaster, a sword and sorcery character in the land of Myrra. (Why did Nightmaster get three issues? Nobody else got more than one since the Maniaks appeared back in 1967!) Created by Denny O'Neil, the second two appearances also boast of art by Berni Wrightson. All three issues sport Kubert covers. Sorry, no Nightmaster series and I am unaware of any future appearances.

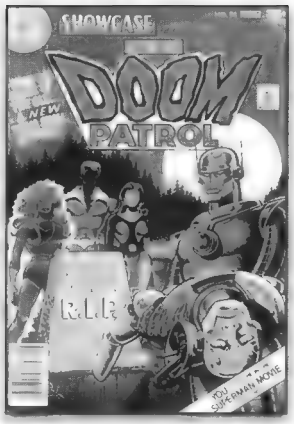
The following three issues (*Showcase* #85-87; September, November, and December, 1969) were reserved for another unusual Western character. Firehair was a redheaded white baby raised by American Indians. He was shunned by both the people who raised him. He did not earn a series, and I don't know where his story continued, if anywhere. There was a comic called *Firebair* from Fiction House in the late '40s, but it was originally titled *Pioneer West Romances*, so believe me when I tell you it wasn't the same thing!

Jason's Quest took over in *Showcase* #88-90 (February, March, and May, 1970). The cover of #88 described it as "the unusual story of a boy… his bike… his search." That's about it. On his deathbed, Jason's father revealed that Jason (a) was adopted and (b) has a twin sister, so Jason went looking for her. In terms of excitement, Jason's Quest was no "Jonny Quest." No series, no nothing.

The next (and last) three issues (#91-93; June, August, and September 1970) were devoted to Manhunter 2070, no relation to Manhunters back in *Showcase* #5 or any of the multitude of other DC characters by that name. This was the story of Starker, an interplanetary bounty hunter. Not only did he fail to earn his own book, but following his appearance *Showcase* went on hiatus for seven years.

When it returned, *Showcase* ran three issues each of the new Doom Patrol, Power Girl, and Hawkman, plus one of O.S.S. Spies at War. There was also a 100th issue spectacular, featuring most of the characters who had appeared in the original 93 issue run. When, after 104 issues, *Showcase* closed up shop for good in 1978, it was with a whimper, not a bang.





A rare J. Scott Pike cover adorns the Dolphin tryout (#79, Dec 1968)

Showcase #94 (Doom Patrol, Aug/Sep 1977) began the second series of the run after a seven year hiatus

There have been successors, but none came close to the original. *New Talent Showcase* ran 19 issues in 1984-85 and failed to produce even one memorable feature or talent. *Showcase* '93, '94, '95, and '96, were nice titles presenting team-ups or spotlighting supporting players, but there was none of the thrill of novelty that the original *Showcase* inspired and the characters weren't really being considered for new series. The closest thing *Showcase* had to a real successor was the incredibly poorly named *First Issue Special*.

In its original 93-issue run, *Showcase* featured 42 different headliners, from superheroes to westerns, from comedy to war, many of which received their own titles and persist even decades later. When you opened up an issue of *Showcase*, you could find a movie adaptation, an old reprint, or the Silver Age rebirth of a classic character.

There's a maxim… that for every brilliant idea you have you'll be forgiven ten rotten ones. *Showcase*'s batting average is much, much higher. *Showcase* is not only the comic book title that "launched a thousand spin-offs," it is the comic that… more than any other… latinched the Silver Age of comic book history!

Showcase #100 (May '78) featured "60 Sensational Super-Stars in the story it took 100 issues to tell!"

WARREN HORROR

Continued from page 25

The first issues were done with a light touch, but the horror elements intensified and everything came together with issue #12. Archie Goodwin came back and wrote a new origin, and Pepe Gonzales defined Vampirella's classic image.

Warren had been contacted by a group of artists from Spain, and Gonzales was joined by Esteban Maroto, Jose Ortiz, Manuel Sanjulian and others who transformed the Warren mags into a lush universe of fine-line rendering with a European style. The design and editorial talents of Bill Dubay and Louise Jones were added to the fold—Rich Corben came along and ushered in a world of wonderful Warren color—and by 1972 the company had fully recovered and was on its way to equalling the achievements of the great early issues.

A period of fertile production followed, marked by some intense linework from a young Bernie Wrightson and a lot of inspired art by the prolific Carmine Infantino. Additionally, in 1974, Warren won the option to publish Will Eisner's Spirit reprint series. Unfortunately, a management mishap transpired: Goodwin found himself at editorial odds with Dubay, and it wasn't long after before both were gone.

Louise Jones managed to keep the editorial direction on track until she noticed that Warren seemed to be distancing himself from the company. The truth was that he had come down with a nameless and persistent disease that left him weak and unable to concentrate that debilitating illness, which eventually plagued him for ten years, caused Warren Publishing to go bankrupt in 1983.

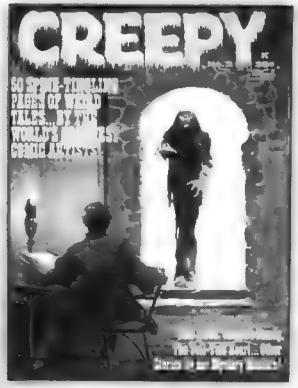
Reuniting in 1993 with his childhood sweetheart, Gloria, put Jim back on the road to health, and he is currently involved in an arduous legal battle to recover his properties—chiefly Vampirella—that others appropriated during his long absence from the publishing arena.

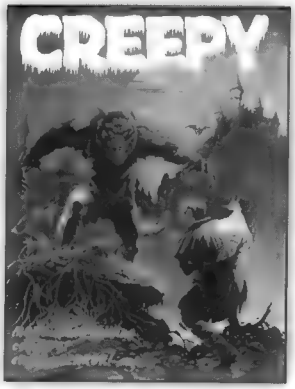
We wish Jim all the best, for he has done a lot more for the comics industry than has been duly noted: not only did he bring back horror comics, bring back adult comics, employ the best writers and artists available, bring back the Spirit, circumvent comics censorship, and prefigure the "bad girl craze," but he also did it all as an early and unsung "independent" publisher—wow!

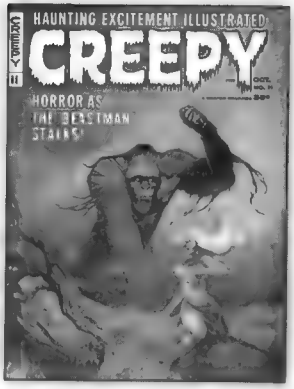
Two Wally Wood panels from Creepy #9. Note the superb planetary art surrounding each panel

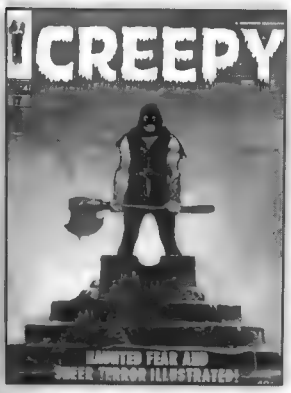
"BUT HILLORY WAS WRONG! MY HEAD..MY IRIDIUM-SPONGE BRAIN, WERE INTACT- MY CRACKED BATTERY STILL FED ME CURRENT AND...
I LIVE! I LIVE! JUST AS I PLANNED!

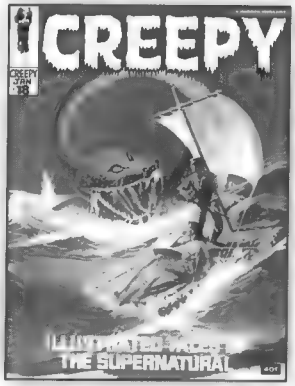
Creepy #9 also featured the sci-fi classic "Adam Link Robot" adapted by the great Otto Binder and comic legend, Joe Orlando

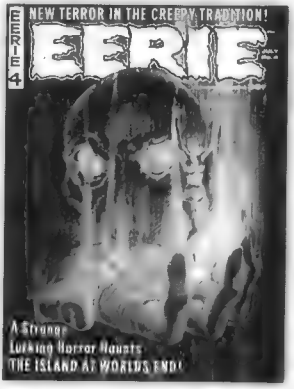


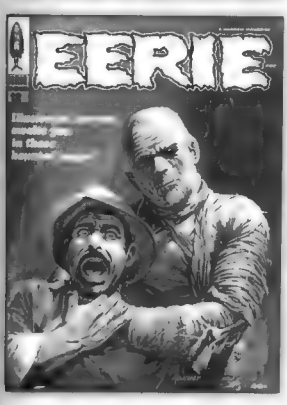








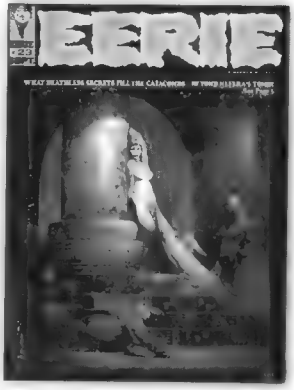




TOP ROW: **Creepy** #3 (Aug 1965, Frazetta cover); **Creepy** #4 (Oct 1965, Frazetta cover), **Creepy** #11 (Oct 1966, Frazetta cover, "Beast Man" by Ditko);

MIDDLE ROW: **Creepy** #17 (Oct 1967); **Creepy** #18 (Jan 1968, cover by Vic Prezio, "Act, Three!" written and drawn by Johnny Craig); **Eerie** #4 (Jul 1966, "Shrieking Man!", by Ditko & Goodwin and "Island At World's End!" by Gray Morrow & Goodwin)

BOTTOM ROW: **Eerie** #12 (Nov 1967, "Vampyrus!" by Jeff Jones); **Eerie** #23 (Sep 1969, Frazetta cover, "Fair Exchange" by Neal Adams & Goodwin)



DC's 1978 Implosion

By Dave Blanchard

The *CBM* forum in issue #71, "DC and Marvel's Bronze Age Implosion," prompted by my earlier letter published in *CBM* #66, illustrates exactly why I wrote in the first place: There is a whole lot of unnecessary confusion about the DC Implosion. I say "unnecessary" because the DC Implosion was a singular event, one that can be precisely pinpointed to the early summer of 1978. It wasn't just an expression for describing the "launch-and-cancel"-happy mood of the times. The DC Implosion, after all, was a nickname given to DC's sudden and unexpected cancellation of nearly 40% of its monthly production in one fell swoop. It was a play-on-words that took a sarcastic jab at the "DC Explosion," a company-wide expansion which saw all of DC's 35¢/32-page comics jump up to 40 pages and 50¢. In terms of actual story pages, the comics went from 17 to 25.

As chronicled at the time by *The Comic Reader* #159 (August, 1978), the DC Implosion occurred on June 22, 1978, when DC dropped 17 existing titles as well as six more that were due to appear that summer but never made it. That's 23 titles, all bounced off the stands and spinracks at the same time, on the same day. That's some kind of implosion!

CBM Forum

The focal point of the DC Explosion, which has been largely forgotten in the 20-plus years since it happened, was actually the 8-page backup strips that appeared in many of the expanded titles. A few titles just went to 25-page, full-length stories… or in the case of the anthologies, just added another story.

In the late spring of 1978, DC took out full-page house ads trumpeting "More pages! More stories! And the most exciting superheroes in comics!" The ads, nicely drawn by Joe Staton, featured 10 back-up players who were soon to get their day in the sun: the Amazons, the Atom, Big Barda, Deadman, Enemy Ace, Hawkman, Martian Manhunter, the Odd Man, an all-new character from Steve Ditko, OMAC and the Ray. Other back-up features announced included the likes of Cinnamon, a new western character, Human Target, Kid Flash and the Vigilante.

DC actually played it pretty cautiously about introducing new titles. Only three titles were launched in the DC Explosion: two war comics, the all-new *Army At War* and the all-reprint *Battle Classics*, and *Dynamic Classics*, which featured early Bronze Age masterpieces such as the O'Neil/Adams Batman and the Goodwin/Simonson Manhunter. Two other reprint titles were supposed to debut as well, but were cut down by the Implosion: *Demand Classics*, Silver Age reprints, the first of which was going to be "Flash of Two Worlds," and *Western Classics*, which was to start with Bat Lash.

Other titles that were announced but never made it to the stands were *The Deserter*, a western, which I was lucky enough to see when DC sent me a b-&-w proof for review purposes, *Strange Adventures*, which was going to be relaunched as a Dollar Comic, a *Swamp Thing* revival, *The Vixen*, a superheroine who eventually ended up in the *JLA*, and a *Weird Mystery Tales* revival.

A couple of titles had been launched or revived just prior to the DC Explosion, namely *Claw The Unconquered*, *Doorway To Nightmare*, *Firestorm*, *Star Hunters*, and *Steel*, and these all went down-for-the-count when the Implosion hit.

However, a fascinating archive of "what might have been" exists. All or most of the cancelled "Implosion" titles ended up appearing in the legendary *Cancelled Comics Cavalcade*, along with a few oddities like *Prez* #5 and two issues of *The Green Team*.

Looking again at #71's *CBM* forum, I must admit that I'm a bit curious about how the author came up with his numbers for how many titles were launched during the years 1975-79. For instance, he lists 26 new DC titles for the year 1975, but according to *Overstreet* data, only 19 DC titles debuted that year, and that's including the DC/Marvel one-shot *MGM'S Marvelous Wizard Of Oz*, as well as *Korak*, which had been cancelled in 1974 but was revived the following year. So I'm at a loss to identify seven other new DCs for 1975.

Similarly, I can only identify eight DC titles that were cancelled in 1975, although the article lists 17. In fact, there seems to be a large discrepancy between *Overstreet* and every one of the years cited as far as DC goes. (I don't track Marvel as closely as I do DC, so I'll leave it to somebody else to corroborate or dispute the Marvel numbers.)

My main point is this: the mid-1970s are by no means the only years when DC launched and then cancelled a lot of titles. From the end of the Go-Go Checks era in 1967 on up to the birth of the limited series in the early 1980s, DC has introduced a staggering amount of titles, and cancelled an equally staggering number.

Look at 1968, for instance, when DC launched, revived, or renamed 13 titles while cancelling 10. Look at 1970-71, when DC dropped every single humor comic it still had. Or look at 1973, when DC launched no fewer than 11 titles composed entirely of reprints, all but one of which, *Black Magic*, would be gone by the spring of 1974. It's pretty safe to say that the 1970s were not DC's finest publishing hour.

Be that as it may, I feel it's important that we not use the term "implosion" as a general catch-all phrase for a company-wide housecleaning. The "DC Implosion" was a unique event, and it refers specifically and ONLY to the sudden end of DC's brief three-month experiment with 40-page regular comics in the summer of 1978.

Thanks to Craig Shutt for help with research.

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

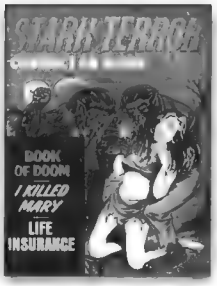
Continued from page 6

of the undergrounds published contemporaneously with these two titles… that is, during the late '60s and early '70s. The covers are mysteriously signed "E" and "Carin," respectively, and the art has a juvenile edge in both style and effect.

Anyone having information leading to the arrest and conviction of these… oops, sorry, wrong blurb! Anyone having information that might save me from future sleepless nights pondering the background and history of these horrible horror issues… please write, phone, email… and help (choke!)… this hapless victim of comic book curiosity (gulp!), before it's (gasp!) too late!

Gary

Gary M. Carter, Editor



Another Price Variant Mystery?

I was surfing the Web a few days ago, thinking about the 35¢ price variants that Marvel sold in the '70s. For me, as with many collectors, the Internet has really fueled the flames of curiosity… there's such an incredible amount of material on the Web. I quickly jumped to one of my favorite sites, eBay, and typed in the keywords "35 cent." The search turned up an extraordinary number of items and I scoured the list and found what I was looking for.

Although there were some non-comic items, the search did come up with the *Star Wars* variant issues with the 35¢ cover price and an *Iron Fist* #14 with the market-test price tag. Finally, in the listing was an *Iron Man* #100 that had the new higher price tag.

I was sure there must be more. So, undaunted, I typed in another keyword search, this time on the phrase "price variant." The screen began to fill with line after line of descriptions about all sorts of things people were trying to sell. Among these were Marvel comic books with the milk-money-heist price tag. Then I found an oddity I wasn't expecting. My wife Beth was the first to hear about it when I called out, "Hey, would ya' lookatthat!"

I clicked the description and it linked me to a listing of 30¢ variants. That was the first I had seen of a variant besides the 35 centers. I can by no means complete a checklist of these variants, but I did see two comic books listed on eBay. The first was *Conan* #64, with a cover date of July 1976, and *Incredible Hulk* #200, cover dated June 1976. Just to double check, I began to dig into boxes of '70's comics and found none in my collection, so I have no more than that to go on.

Here's the mystery… if those eBay listings are correct, they suggest that issues published in June, July, and August of 1976 could have the 30¢ variant. I even heard that there could be 25¢ variants of 20¢ comic books.

I'm going to go continue my search… if you can help sort this one out, please write to *CBM* and help us solve this price variant mystery.

—Contributed by Rick Holley

THE MICHAEL NAIMAN REPORT

Jack Kirby's pencil?

How many times have you heard the arrogant statement from a collector along the lines of "Oh, I only collect HIGH GRADE (insert your choice of title) Gold/Silver comic books... that other stuff's junk!" As I've always said, though, "One man's Bronze Age book is another man's Silver (or Golden) Age book." If the hobby is to survive into the next century, this type of snobbish elitism must end. Is there a better way to snuff out interest in a hobby than to denigrate another's choice of collectible? I find it fascinating to see what people collect. And, I don't care what they collect... bottle tops, dolls, radios, or cap guns!

I understand the need to collect and I can appreciate the enthusiasm that underlies the collecting spirit. Too many folks (and we all know a couple) have their self-worth wrapped up in what they own. A very large part of this elitism is also a result of the monetary investment that has been made in the book. Part of the maturing process in collecting is the development of an understanding, tolerance, and appreciation of other genres and interests.

And there's plenty to appreciate... Platinum, Gold, Silver, Bronze and, yes, Virginia, even Modern comics, once you educate yourself. And that's the key... education and investigation into the roots of an era, something to bring it alive to a new generation.

Speaking of bringing something to life I've noticed a very strong buying pulse for the mid 1970's Marvel Giant-Size books. Yes, I know that these have been a drug on the market for some time, but tolerance everyone, (see above), these books are being collected by many who view them as their Silver Age squarebound giants!

There appears to be two distinct title groupings of books that are currently in demand in very high grade. This overview does NOT include the breakout issue of Giant Size X-Men #1. The first level books that appear to demand more than Guide are Avengers, Chillers, Creatures, Dracula, Defenders, and Master of Kung Fu. There is no telling how high the Kid Colt issues will sell for... there is an enormous demand for this title. Following very closely behind at near Guide prices are Conan, Fantastic Four, Man-Thing, and Werewolf. Take a look at this month's CBM MarketWatch for up-to-date prices.

The marketplace for original comic art continues to buzz along strongly 60 days after the momentous San Diego show. There's an affordable page out there for everyone's wallet. The Golden Age material is not as expensive as one would tend to expect, (when you can find it), but, the bigger dollars seem to be flowing toward the Silver Age material.

Some of the most recent original art sales include: Williamson/Krenkel "The Arrival" from Shock Suspense #8 $7,300 in cash/trade. Bob Oskner Angel and the Ape #5 pg. #5 (measuring 11" x 17") $160; Wally Wood Angel and the Ape #5 pg 25 (measuring 11" x 17") $255; Jack Kirby Jimmy Olsen #144 pg. 11 (measuring 11" x 17") $290; a Kirby penciled Captain America #206 pg. 7 (measuring 11" x 17") $192.50, and a Kirby Eternals splash page from issue #1 for $687. For the real hardcore Kirby collector a used pencil from the desk of Jack Kirby has sold for only $150! Try and imagine what great scenes that little leaded wonder might have produced!

Other art sales include a couple of Gene Colan pieces... a pen and ink Dr. Doom sketch (measuring 11" x 14") $99 and a Not Brand Echh #5 pg 5 (1967) $162.50; a couple of pieces by Marie Severin include the cover from Crazy #1 (1973) $1,087 and the cover to Not Brand Echh #12 (1968) for $1,260; Frank Miller Daredevil #165 pg. 22 for $430; and Griffith's classic Underground cover art to Young Lust #1 for $2,100.

Speaking of Undergrounds, at San Diego there was still some very strong marketplace action with Underground

(Continued on page 77) •

MARKET REPORTS

GREG PHARIS • DAVE GRISEZ

SAN DIEGO COMICS & COLLECTIBLES
6937 EL CAJON BLVD.
SAN DIEGO, CA 92115
619•698•1177

Thanks to all who dropped in during the San Diego Con to say Hi... we look forward to seeing you all next year. I'd like to briefly discuss a few trends that are obvious in our location.

(1) Comics from the 1980s to the present are flooding the market. Of course, this is a great trend for comic readers who are now able to get these books at extremely reasonable prices. But, this is not such a deal for those ex-readers or speculators who are trying to get pennies on the dollar for their books. However, there is a bright spot here if one looks closely. Many younger, newer collector/readers are interested in these 1980's books because they are reasonably priced.

(2) It certainly is a free-for-all on the Internet and this has brought many previously hard to find books out into the open. I see no end in sight and that's healthy for everyone. Condition is always a major concern for savvy buyers, and many realize the grading competency of those from whom we purchase books is often minimal or sometimes nonexistent!

(3) Marvels in mid- to low-grade have made a comeback especially Spider-Man and FF.

(4) Last but not least, collectible toys from the past, particularly the mid 1980s, remain a constant and strong seller for us.

Sales: Prices mentioned here are a combination of known recordable sales from the Internet, consignment and store sales: Blue Beetle #53 FN+ $306; Dagar (Fox) #20 GD+ $40; Exciting #60 FN $20; FF #2 FN+ $550, FF Ann #1 FN $125; Jo Jo #12 GD+ $52; Secret Love #29 VG $36; Showcase #4 GD- $1,000, Thrilling #64 VG+ 175.

◆◆ CBM MarketWatch ◆◆

A report of market indicator sales (including % of Guide) by Michael Naiman

Action

#18 VG	$312	60%
#46 VF+	$420	72%
#83 FN	$123	73%
#89 VG	$165	1 47X
#282 VF	$35	72%

Adventure

#44 (App)FN	$660	40%
#44 GD	$303	55%
#45 FN	$520	65%
#46 VG-	$600	79%
#46 VG-	$600	79%
#48 AppFN-	$2,175	41%
#49 VG-	$355	85%
#54 VG	$209	59%
#56 FN	$280	53%

All American

#21 VG	$335	73%
All Star		
#5 GD	$335	82%
#25 VG-	$150	61%
#15 FN	$450	67%

Amazing Fantasy

#15 AppFN	$1,950	38%

Amazing Spider-Man

#4 VF	$597	57%
#5 VF	$406	45%
#8 NM-	$535	67%
#10 VF	$315	63%
#10 NM	$660	93%
#14 NM-	$945	61%
#16 NM	$410	1 09X
#28 NM	$325	90%
#39 FN	$43	68%
#45 FN+	$20	74%

Avengers

#5 VF+	$96	66%
#7 VF+	$86	74%
#8 VG	$17	47%
#100 VF	$25	57%

Batman

#13 VG	$295	57%
#23 GD	$408	2 24X
#71 VG	$84	79%
#247 NM	$17	85%
#250 NM	$22	1 1X

Blue Ribbon

#3 VG	$109	71%
#7 VG	$93	80%
#10 VF+	$382	75%

Brave & Bold

#2 VG	$125	62%
#3 VG+	$97	93%
#35 VF+	$145	48%
#43 NM	$240	73%

Captain America

#51 VF+	$680	1 05X
#146 NM	$19	3 16X
#147 NM	$27	4 5X
#151 NM	$16	2 66X

Daredevil

#1 GD	$102	75%
#2 VG	$60	75%
#3 FN	$66	71%

Detective

#63 VG+	$205	79%
#88 VF+	$500	1 1X
#92 VF	$187	48%
#99 FN+	$295	95%
#114 VG+	$152	86%

Fantastic Four

#1 VG+	$1,585	1 07X
#2 VG	$610	1 27X
#3 VG	$270	82%
#48 FN+	$190	89%
#53 VF+	$96	1 73X

Flash

#109 FN	$41	33%
#114 VG	$23	44%
#137 FN	$51	43%
#175 FN	$20	48%

(Giant-Size...) Avengers

#1 NM	$21	1 31X
#2 NM	$13	1 31X
#3 NM	$13	1 31X

(Giant-Size...) Chillers

#1 NM	$17	1 21X
#2 NM	$12	1 2X

(Giant-Size...) Conan

#1 NM	$15 50	1 03X
#2 NM	$11.50	96%
#3 NM	$9 75	97%
#4 NM	$9 75	97%

(Giant-Size...) Creatures

#1 NM	$41	2 28X

(Giant-Size...) Defenders

#1 NM	$23	1 04X
#2 NM	$12 50	1 04X
#3 NM	$10	Guide

(Giant-Size...) Doc Savage

#1 NM	$5	50%

(Giant-Size...) Dracula

#1 NM	$12 50	52%
#3 NM	$20	2X

(Giant-Size...) Fantastic Four

#2 NM	$9.50	63%
#3 NM	$9 50	63%
#4 NM	$9 50	63%
#5 NM	$7 50	63%

(Giant-Size...) Invaders

#1 NM	$25	2.08X

(Giant-Size...) Man-Thing

#2 NM	$8.50	85%
#3 NM	$8 50	85%
#4 NM	$13.75	85%

(Giant-Size...) Master of Kung Fu

#1 NM	$22 50	1 4X
#2 NM	$14	1.4X
#3 NM	$14	1.4X

(Giant-Size...) Spider-Man

#5 NM	$13 50	84%

(Giant-Size...) Super-Heroes

#1 NM	$22 50	47%

(Giant-Size...) Super-Stars

#1 NM	$18	82%

(Giant-Size...) Werewolf

#2 NM	$17 50	1 46X
#3 NM	$7 75	65%
#4 NM	$10 50	65%
#5 NM	$7 75	65%

GI Combat

#83 VF+	$120	1 75X

Green Lantern

#10 FN	$79	1 09X
#13 FN	$81	1 5X
#16 FN	$36	92%

Journey into Mystery

#84 FN+	$245	1 03X
#85 VF+	$310	86%
#87 VF+	$162	96%
#93 GD	$25	1 61X
#100 GD	$13	1 18X
#105 FN	$15 50	65%
#109 FN	$22 50	68%
#114 NM-	$65	93%
#122 FN-	$10	48%

Jumbo

#60 FN+	$125	1 3X
#144 FN+	$50	1 14X
#157 FN	$40	90%

Katy Keene

#4 VG	$65	87%
#14 VG+	$60	1 15X
#17 VG+	$45	83%

Marvel Mystery

#18 FN+	$406	74%
#92 VF	$715	54%

Marvel Spotlight

#3 VF+	$26	1 37X

More Fun

#103 VG	$195	1 10X
#104 VG+	$161	1 06X

Mystery in Space

#4 VG	$104	96%
#4 FN	$104	64%

National

#1 NM (Mile High)	$17,600	4X
#2 NM (Mile High)	$6,800	4X
#3 NM (Mile High)	$4,800	4X
#4 NM (Mile High)	$3,800	4X
#5 NM (Mile High)	$4,300	4X

Our Army at War

#105 FN	$41	1 37X

Showcase

#18 FN	$278	1 09X
#25 VF	$175	93%

Superman

#25 VF+	$467	73%
#26 VG+	$140	68%
#27 FN+	$209	68%
#31 VF	$336	66%
#49 VG+	$96	72%
#85 FN	$91	69%

Tales of Suspense

#18 GD	$27	1 08X
#23 VG	$23	61%
#34 VG	$21	62%

Tales to Astonish

#34 VG+	$47	1 35X
#36 VF+	$345	97%
#37 App VG+	$25	38%

Uncle Scrooge

#3(FC#495) FN+	$100	75%
#5 FN	$100	1 27X
#29 FN	$24	75%
#52 VF+	$41	76%
#53 VF	$37	69%

Whiz

#2(#1) App VG	$5,000	36%

Wonder Woman

#15 FN+	$230	89%
#20 FN	$157	61%

X-Men

#2 VF	$350	33%
#3 FN+	$105	64%
#23 NM	$76	76%
#56 FN	$20	1 11X

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bruce@quasarcomics.com

As time finally nears for the next auction, the following requests seem to predominate and are a good indicator of where a lot of collector interest lies: Spint Sections! I've had several requests for these lately! Assorted Silver Age DC comics from around 1956 to 1963. Hard to say which issues, but a variety of collectors have sent me their want lists asking for pretty much all of the mainstream superhero Silver DCs. Most of the requests have been for GD to FN copies, so true collector interest appears to be the case here.

I also continue to receive a lot of requests for 1950s Horror, Fanzines, and BLBs. These areas have been very actively sought in the last few months. In the last month I have had about 25 requests for BLBs alone!

Items not requested much lately: Almost no expressed interest in comics from the 1980s and newer, most Gold Key and Dell titles, Timely (that seems odd to me) and Platinum Age books.

(Continued on page 72)

Continued from page 71

JOSHUA NATHANSON • COMICLINK

4842 GLENWOOD STREET
LITTLE NECK, NY 11362
718•423•6079
www.comiclink.com

The market is getting stronger here, especially for high grade material and scarce Golden Age Issues slightly lower than NM (VF+ to NM-) are heating up as strictly graded NM or better keeps getting more and more rare

Recent sales Action Comics #173 VG $65; #252 VG $220; Amazing Spider-Man #3 VF/NM $1,750, #4 NM- $1,850, #7 GD+ $67, #33 NM+ $310 (2x guide), #44 NM- $120, #47 NM/MT- $140, #65 NM- $45, #71 NM- $60, #75 NM- $501, #77 NM- $35, #121 VG $20, #134 VF+ $20, #200 NM/MT $36 (2 copies @ 2x guide); Avengers #1 VF/VF+ $1,600; Captain America #53 FN- $375; Dagar $23 VG+ $150; Daredevil #3 NM/NM+ (tiny tear bc) $500, #9 NM+ $260 (2x guide); Detective #202 VG/FN $105; Fantastic Four #6 FN/VF $495, #33 NM- $140, #36 NM- $145, #55 NM- $130; Hulk #4 VF $445, #181 NM/NM+ $650 (2 copies), #181 VF/NM $465;

Journey Into Mystery #98 VF $80, #100 VF/NM $90, #113 NM- $105; Marvel Mystery #32 GD+ $175; Sensation #64 VG/FN $100, #79 VG/FN $85, #86 VG (tr seals bc) $50, #87 FN/VF $120, #95 VG/FN $120, #98 VG $110; Showcase #11 VG/FN $275; Strange Tales #106 VF+ $155, Superboy #68 GD+ $55, #89 GD $25; Tales to Astonish #14 VG- $50,

Witchcraft #5 (tiny pc out bot rt fc o/w) VF+ $750; Witches Tales #25 VG $175; Wonder Woman #39 FN+ $225, #41 VG/FN $115; Worlds Finest #49 VG (white pages) $170; Young Allies #20 VF/VF+ $425; X-Men #7 VF+ $265, #7 VF/VF+ $220, #8 VF/NM $300, #10 VF/NM $225, #25 VF+$85, #26 VF+ $85, $60 VF++ $55; Zoot #13A VG/FN $150, #14A FN- $15, #16 FN/FN- $160.

TERRY HOKNES

739 TAYLOR STREET EAST
SASKATOON, SK S7H 1W1
CANADA
306•343•6597
comicsape@dicwest.com

Many dealers I talk to say that sales are getting tougher and tougher on the internet. This is definitely the case with common superhero books of the last 30 years. Any easy-to-find book just does not sell on its own if it's a cheap, common book. Most high grade expensive modern books do not reach near Guide—possibly due to the fact that most collectors do not trust that they are going to get an accurately graded book. However, I did a test run selling low to mid-grade comics (under $10) from approx 1960-1975 and more than half of the books I sold actually went for ABOVE Guide! This included some DC war, John Stanley horror, and other "hip" titles/genres The market is still very strong for certain books even in mid grades. Once again, the market itself is not weak (as some suggest) but rather just certain titles.

Here are some of my most interesting sales: Action Comics #427 VG $2; Amazing Spider-Man #158 (variant cvr price) FN $32; DC Special #3 VG $26, #3 VG $25, #5 VG $7.50; Droids #5 VF+ $20, #6 VG $20.50, #7 FN $20.50, #8 FN $20.50; Ewoks #4 NM $15, #6 NM $12, #12 NM $25; Freedom Fighters #10 VF $6, #11 VF $5, Ghosts #2 VG $5.50; House Of Mystery #224 VG $9 50; House Of Secrets #92 VG+ $75; Island Of Dr. Moreau #1 VG $2, John Carter Warlord Of Mars (Marvel) #18 NM- $16; Life Of Pope John Paul II #1 VF $6.50; Planet Of The Apes #21 VF $12, #27 NM $16.50; Plop #23 VF+ $10.50, #24 VF+ $15.50; Secrets Of Haunted House #1 VF- $13.50; Sinister House Of Secret Love #2 VG; $8 50; Spidey Super Stories #6 VF- $8 50; Star Comics Digest #1 NM $15.50, #2 NM $15.50; Star Wars Treasury #3 VF- $15; Star Wars #68 NM $15, #94 NM- $8, #101 NM $18, #102 NM $18; SG Lois Lane #70 VG $22.50; Treasury Annual UK 1973 FR $2; Weird Myst. Tales #2 (Titanic) FN+ $12.50, Weird Western Tales #37 VF+ $8, #38 VF+ $8; Witching Hour #1 VG $11.50

JOEL THINGVALL • THE NOSTALGIA ZONE

3149 1/2 HENNEPIN AVENUE SO.
MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55408
612•822•2806
nostzone@spacestar.net

It's the time of the year when Midwest life starts to settle down and the comic collector tackles important jobs in his/her life: sort the spinner rack, bag the piles of books built up over the summer (and one might actually read them), look more closely at those mail order catalogs, spend a little time each day on the various auction sites, and chat a bit more with the behind-the-counter help at the ye ol' comic shoppe.

After the local one-day comic collector show is over for the month and the last of the 20th century multi-media conventions winds down, one spends a moment to take stock of his or her collecting and hobby life. As a collector, I get excited telling people about recent acquisitions. I have little stories to tell about conquests in old bookshops, reasons why an artist drew this sketch, what significance this toy fading in the window light brings to my life.

I know my own collection may not be as expensive as some of my fellow hobbyists (or as impressive in condition and quality), but to me it is priceless I collect, like so many of us, because I enjoy certain things. I constantly overpay, and oddly I'm joyous when I do… and the concept of selling my priceless treasures just doesn't exist.

Sure, I'm a collector in my heart, but a dealer in reality. So flipping stuff that comes in the door that doesn't find a place in my soul is a daily agenda item. I try to avoid that mercenary glee when exchanging a comic book for green, as I do hope that Golden Age gem, Silver Age oddity, or original art masterpiece will find a happy home. New collectors are out there. We have a few homeschool teachers that constantly visit the store to pick up Classics Illustrated for their children. With Classics you can get a youngster to appreciate Dickens, Shakespeare, or even Hawthorne

I still find parents digging through the Archie, Dennis the Menace, and various Dell Warner Bros.cartoon character titles Most all of these have good, fun storylines. I shudder when I see how many titles Richie Rich has appeared in, but the recent direct to video films of Harvey characters has increased questions about Wendy the Good Little Witch, Casper, Baby Huey, and the Poor Little Rich Boy himself. The secret is that parents remember a lot of these characters (as well as the ever popular Disney gang) and if they can find an inexpensive way to share their childhood joys with their children (hopefully at an Age before the kids become totally jaded by dynamite digitalized video-game graphics) we might just have a Kodak family moment, and possibly a future comic reader.

On the collecting front, Archies continue to heat up in sales. The lower the grade, the

cheaper. Recent sales include Archie Annual #5 GD/VG $50, #10 GD/VG $30, #15 GD/VG $15; Archie #19 GD $45; Betty & Veronica #9 GD+ $45; Jughead Annual #6 VG/FN $35; and Double Life of Private Strong #2 GD/VG $60. Imagine what the prices might be in high grade.

Are there buyers? There's movement still in older Classics Illustrated. Some recent sales from here are: Robinson Crusoe #10 (1st) VG/FN $210; Kidnapped #36 (1st) VG/FN $27; Forty-Five Guardsmen #113 (1st) VG/FN $20; Soldier of Fortune #119 (1st) VG/FN $19; Master of the World #163 (1st) FN/VF $21; Indians #2 FN/VF $20; French Revolution #14 VG+ $16; and Communications: Time & Space #20 FN $20

A marvelous collection of MAD Magazine on CD-ROM was recently released. The entire run through 1998 is available for less than $70. But, we still can sell the magazines and the comics: MAD #9 FR $40, #13, GD/VG $70, #15 FR/GD $40, #20 GD/VG $60. We sold some Do-Do (Nationwide) as well, #2 GD/VG $15, #3 VG $20, #4 VG/FN $25 ,#7 VG $20

Newspaper strip collections can still be found and the collecting market is small but very strong: Ferd'nand (Holt-Reinhart) '57 PBG $10; Rex Morgan (Argo) 1 VG $20; Drago (Pacific Comics) FN/VF $15, Spirit (Tabloid Press) VG/FN $30, and Mort Walker's Lexicon of Comicana NM $20.

Anything Modesty Blaise is extremely hot! On the Internet, if you mention Boris or Frazetta, it sells. Art moves extremely well, especially cheesecake—almost hotter than covers and splash pages. What's all of it worth? Whatever someone is willing to pay!

TONY STARKS • COMICS IHA FLASH!
PO BOX 3611
EVANSVILLE, IN 47735-3611
877•557•2027
comicflash@aol.com

What a year 1999 is turning out to be! Sales of collectible back issues comic books are great! The lower, more accurate Guide prices for lesser condition books has rekindled interest and brought many former collectors back into the hobby. The hobby has diversified too, with collector interest expanding to include more genres, eras, and publishers than I have seen since the early 1980s. Platinum to Bronze, Hero to Horror, Magazines to Treasuries, it just seems most every facet of the hobby has some real interest in it.

Bronze Age: My specialty, so I'll start here There is a **very strong** Bronze Age market. The average '70s collector continues to be strongly interested in the unusual and offbeat, but the market has started to rebound in the more mainstream titles as well.

People still pay big bucks for Dark Mansion of Forbidden Love #1-4 (#1 FN sold at $25) and Night Nurse #1-4 (#1VG sold @ $15), but it's getting hard to keep nice 15-20¢ cover price copies of Amazing Spider-Man, Defenders below #20, and Marvel Team-Up below #50 (#18 NM @ $7.50). Other superhero sales of note include Captain America #193 NM (Kirby's return) $10, Red Wolf #1 NM $15, Super Friends #1 NM $40, #2 NM $15, Lois Lane #105 NM- (1st Rose & Thorn) $30 and #106 VF+ $20.

A lot of what were once slow titles have found new life. Kamandi, Demon, and Plastic Man are selling well again. Even Conan is showing renewed interest. In fact, 15¢ and most 20¢ cover price mainstream superhero books in NM are gone as soon as they hit the catalogue.

What else is selling well? Better you should ask what is not. Treasury size books are HOT! (e.g. Superman vs. Wonderwoman VF+ $25, Superman Vs Muhammad Ali NM $35). Also Digest size comic books have joined up with the 52, 68 and 100-page Giants as quick sellers. Digest size comics just sell instantly at Guide prices. Some titles published between 1975-77 are increasing notably in demand. Kirby's books from this time period are on the rise, with titles like Eternals, Devil Dinosaur, Machine Man, and 2001 a Space Odyssey selling steadily at Guide prices. (Issues #8 NM $5, #9 NM $4, and #10 NM $4. These three issues of 2001 introduce Machine Man, and many collectors feel these to be undervalued.

The new Star Wars movie rekindled some interest in the Marvel series Numerous issues of Star Wars #1-30 were sold at Guide, and entire set of #1-107 in NM+ condition sold for $1,000! On the DC side, Freedom Fighters #1 (NM $12) is a hot book and the black cover makes true NM hard to find. The Freedom Fighters introduction in JLA #107 & 108 are even more in demand, and bring $18 in NM.

Charltons: The horror/mystery books are really in demand. First issues of titles like Ghost Manor (#1 FN $20), Scary Tales (#1 NM $25), Midnight Tales (#1 NM $30) and Ghostly Tales (#55 FN $12) are undervalued, and easily go for 1.5-2x Guide. There are a lot of collectors that would LOVE to have a list of all the Charlton horror/mystery books that were done by the "good" artists (Ditko first and foremost, but also Aparo, Howard, Newton, and Sutton). Many, many "breakout" issues will emerge in the near future as these are documented for collectors.

Romance: Let's talk about romance books. On the surface of it, nothing seems stranger than men 30+ years old collecting romance comic books. This all started when collectors working on runs of DC's giant size (52/100 pages) let it be known that the romance books were amongst the hardest giant size comics to locate. Tell a collector they can't have it, and it becomes a "gotta have it" item. Romance is still selling about 100 times better than it did ten years ago, but the market for these books is starting to settle into a more sensible pattern. At romance's zenith about 18 months ago, it seemed any VG copy of any romance comic published in the last 35 years was a sure sell at or over Guide. Now, collectors seem more selective.

The giant size issues (particularly the 52 pagers) are still good sellers, but now, on regular size issues, collectors ask: "does it have a really cool cover?" What's a really cool cover? Girls in bikinis are cool. A girl getting a big kiss planted on her by some macho guy is cool, really cool if she's in a bikini! (Examples are Young Love #92 NM- $20, Summer Love #48 VG $5, etc.)

"Women's Lib" covers and stories are great (Young Love #106 FN $3.50). "Hippy" and "Swinger" type issues are also cool, especially if they mention Woodstock or have a "hippy" and a "straight" competing for the girl. In short, guys are buying these books because the stories are ludicrous and the covers exploitive Bad taste is just sooooo much fun.

Magazines: They have taken off again. Monster stuff leads the pack, with Eerie and Creepy issues much in demand. Vampirella, after a lot of overexposure in the comic books series, is now selling well again. Marvel has books here, too. Tales of the Zombie is Hot. (#1 FN $6, #7 & 8 GD $1.50@, #9 NM $9). Deadly Hands of Kung Fu and the Conan Magazines have seen a marked increase in interest. And hey, it's way past the time that the Price Guide should be listing Famous Monsters of Filmland. These sell great when I have them, and you see them at most major auctions of comic book related material and

comic book shows!

Silver Age: The most notable trend for me in this area is how well GD and VG books are selling. While NM is always welcome and typically sells at around Guide prices, I would oftentimes rather have a lower grade copy of most Silver Age books than a VF copy. The GD or VG copy will most likely sell, the VF will take a hefty discount to move. I sell a lot of Silver Age. I don't set a lot of records, and I don't try to keep the big keys in stock, but I do sell a lot of Silver Age books in the $5-$50 dollar range.

So far this year, I have sold thousands of issues of mainstream titles in various grades, from Action (#360 GD $3.50) to X-Men (#45 NM- $45) and everything in between. Virtually nothing more than Guide, oftentimes a little less. Titles that stand out include Action and Wonder Woman. Both Guide relatively low compared to other titles, which probably explains much of the interest there Gold Key's Tarzan (#134 VG $3 and #171 VF $13) enjoyed a modest increase in demand following the movie, and Turok once again is selling steadily, now that Acclaim has (ahem) stopped destroying the character. Slow titles include Strange Tales and Sgt. Fury. Oddly enough, Marvel's Western titles are slow as Silver Age books, screaming hot as Bronze Age.

I find books prior to 1960 do sell well if they are in the $50 or less range. Recent sales include a few of the Popped Wheat giveaways $5@, Black Cat #23 VF- $60, and Big Shot #64 VG $20

GREG WHITE
17 WEST MONUMENT AVENUE
KISSIMMEE, FL
407•239•0405
whizzer@phoenixat.com

We are back from San Diego and just getting into our autumn groove. Summer sales at the store were average. We held our own but did not set any records. Considering the fact that three long standing stores went out of business in the Orlando area this summer we are thankful to be having a decent year. It is certainly a challenge to run a successful over-the-counter retail shop in the face of increasing Internet competition and a generally fickle buying public.

San Diego was OK but nothing great. The collector crowd was dollar poor and we made few large sales (over $1000). Many collectors are filling their needs over the Internet now a days and no longer feel the need to attend local shows. The over-the-counter retail business is forever changing. Many stores will not survive. Internet sales at close to retail price would be fine, however, that is usually not the case. For the most part, the Internet mindset is that of a flea market and collectors expect huge discounts. Not good if a dealer has paid a fair price for a collection and is looking to make a reasonable markup. The next few years will be interesting.

Silver Age: The store has been quiet since I returned from San Diego. A few Marvels have sold. San Diego Silver Age sales were so-so. I had to discount most books Many fine comics went "unlooked at" the entire weekend. High grade keys always seem to be in demand—however often times when I produce the book the collector will not pay retail for it. The same story was true in San Diego. Certain DC titles remain popular (Batman, Flash, Showcase) but most are slow. Non Marvel and DC Silver Age remain stagnant, especially at Guide prices.

Silver Age Sales: Amazing Spider-Man #45 VF/NM $80; Batman Annual #1 VG $85; Brave & Bold #29 GD $75, Showcase #23 VG $150.

Golden Age: We have moved many early Batman issues this month. Most sold below Guide. Many of the longstanding DC Golden Age books will sell at 20%-40% below Guide. I have trouble getting full Overstreet for most books from this period. I hope the overall prices in the Guide gets adjusted. Exceptions would be WW II covers and classic art covers.

Golden Age Sales: Batman #8 VG $400, #10 FN $650, Betty & Veronica Annual #2 GD $30; Jingle Jangle #31 NM $25; Marvel Mystery #30 GD $150.

Original Art: Never in my 37 years of collecting have I seen Silver Age original art prices as high as I did in San Diego this summer. Of course, very few pieces sold. The same items that I saw on Thursday were still hanging on the display wall on late Sunday afternoon. Piece after piece of Silver Age comic art was priced 2-3 times what would have previously been reasonable. I felt that many of the 'dealers' who put the art up for sale brought these pieces from their own collections and didn't really want to sell the items

From the standpoint of an original art collector, San Diego was more a 'museum' show than a viable venue to purchase vintage art. I would suggest that these 'dealers' leave their artwork at home or just put NFS (not for sale) on the material instead of an inflated price.

I purchased a significant amount of pre-1970 comic book and comic strip art in the '70s and '80s for my own collection—so I balk at most of the asking prices that I saw in San Diego.

FELIX LUGO • PHILS COMIC BOOKS
11 FIFTH AVENUE
NEW YORK, NY 10003
212•674•0054
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The comic book market is on an all-time, upscale swing thanks to the Internet and international collectors. There is renewed interest in all grades of Golden, Silver, and Bronze Age comic books. We are seeing a shift in the marketplace. Collectors are interested in more than just high priced Golden Age books. They now have access to fascinating and reasonably priced books from all eras.

The Internet, with the help of cyber-auctions, has made uncommon issues attainable and affordable. Prior to 1970, comic books were always highly priced and scarce. In part, this was due to the limited accessibility of large comic book shows. Furthermore, collectors were always reluctant to sell their collections to dealers. That has changed; today collectors can communicate with other collector's worldwide to trade and buy. They can now attain highly desirable books which were previously out of reach for the average consumer.

Interestingly, our older books have attracted a good deal of international attention Most of our Golden & Silver Age books were purchased by collectors in other countries via our website. Collectors from the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia order more older books than US collectors. Our most sought after Silver Age books include Fantastic Four, Avengers, Amazing Spider-Man, X-Men & Batman. Issues #1 to #10 are hot sellers in any grade. Regardless of condition, Golden Age books sell well at 90% of Guide. In some cases, they sell at 125% of Guide. Bronze Age is still in high demand and

has plenty of room for growth.

In addition to comic books, pulp magazines are causing their own ripple in the market. Pulp magazines in Very Fine condition sell easily at $35 to $45, while other popular issues like Weird Tales in Fine condition sell at above $100 Collectors are just discovering how scarce these books are in high grade. In fact Pulp Magazines are rare at fine or better condition!

Recent sales: Amazing Spider-Man #100 VG $65, #129 $95; Batman 80 Page Giant # 5 missing back cover o/w VG $10; House of Mystery #110 FR $4; I Love Lucy #18 VG- $31.56; Love Stories Jan 1939 (Pulp) GD $20; NM Tales of Suspense #86 NM $20; RBCC Fanzine #75 (Conan Cover) NM $11.19; The Profit by Joel Beck Underground RARE NM $74.78; Western Stories Dec 1942 (Pulp) GD $22; Will Eisner Signed Newspaper Insert Proof 1940s VG $49.

Assorted Collections: Art of Wally Wood Hardcover VF $31; Batman Bride of the Demon Hardcover VG $5; Punisher Blood on the Moors Hardcover VF $6.50; Punisher Return To Nothing Big Hardcover VG $5; Zorro by Alex Toth Vol 1 TBP NM $10; Zorro by Alex Toth Vol. 2 TBP NM $20.50.

TOM GORDON • MONUMENTAL COLLECTIBLES
PO BOX 388
MANCHESTER, MD 21102
410•848•0275
moncollect@aol.com

Several dealers have commented that Internet sales are lowering the number of customers at shows. Apparently some of the long-time customers are finding it easier to locate books online. While this may be more convenient than driving to a show, the Internet does lack the atmosphere and action of a comic show. Another major issue with Internet sales is the insufficient amount of competent grading done by some sellers I have heard some real horror stories when discussing Internet purchases with several collectors

Platinum Age comics and memorabilia, as always, sell well when available; there are several major buyers from Europe and they seriously collect this era of collectibles. The main difficulty in collecting this material is locating it in any condition. These vintage items are so scarce that if you find a particular item, you may want to purchase it because it is difficult to say when another may become available

Premiums and toys continue to sell well, especially anything relat- *(Continued on page 76)*

THE MATT SCHIFFMAN REPORT

Low & mid-grade Timelys set records

All in all, this fall has been an excellent time to be in the comic hobby. Collectors have been able to turn up some great material and sellers have been able to make more contacts than ever before. One really hates to over-hype just what the Internet has done for the hobby, but it has literally turned it on its head. Online trading and sales have brought new exposure for long dormant titles and facilitated a new and easy way for buyers to look over previously inaccessible merchandise.

Golden Age: It took a break for a bit, but, Schomburg airbrushed issues are now back in force. Startlings and Thrillings in any grade are in demand. Low grade Timely books continue to amaze both collectors and dealers, with many GD condition issues selling at VG and higher prices, while other VG books often sit at well below Guide. Sub-Mariner is the title of the season and can realize even higher prices than most Timely titles. Also early Human Torch, Captain America #1-10, 70-74, and virtually any Marvel Mystery, Daring Mystery, or Mystic (1st series) sells well.

Golden Age Sales: Action #2 FR $1,900; Adventure #61 FR $650, #73 VG $1,700; Detective #122 GD $140; Flash #33 VF $550; Leading #1 FN/VF $1,300; Military #22 NM $280; Molly O'Day #1 VF $450; Punch #17 VF/NM $420; Scoop #8 VF/VF+ $490; Sub-Mariner #1 GD $1,950, #2 FR $450.

Atom Age: Good Girl books in any condition are in high demand right now, and leading the way is Fox. FRs, GDs and NM+s have all brought above Guide prices over the past two months. L. B. Cole covers on Terrors of the Jungle are heating up again, and Matt Baker continues to find an excited audience. Pre-Code horror has sorted itself out and not every title brings outrageous multiples.

Atom Age Sales: Chamber of Chills #12 FN $110; Claire Voyant #4 NM- $680; Crime SuspenStories #23 FN $120; Fight #31 VF $180; Guns Against Gangsters #1 VF $340; Red Ryder #100 NM $75; Science Comics #1 (1946) VF $220; Seven Seas #4 FR $110, #6 FR/PR $125; Zoot #18 GD $58.

Silver Age: This is far and away the largest collector base in our hobby and therefore often produces some of the most interesting market data. The science fiction titles lead the way right now with Strange Adventures in high demand, along with the early Mystery in Space issues. Although always popular, Brave & Bold and Showcase are seeing some interesting demand. Even Gold Key Star Treks are selling again!

Silver Age Sales: Amazing Spider-Man #1 GD $1,100; Brave & Bold #80 VF $48; Captain America #100 VF $220; Daredevil #1 GD $160; Iron Man #1 NM- $475; JLA #1 GD $280; Journey into Mystery #83 GD $400; Showcase #58 GD $19; Star Trek #1 VF $385; Strange Adventures #19 GD $68; Strange Tales #110 GD $170; Tales of Suspense #31 VF/NM $490; #57 NM- $250.

Bronze Age: After a brief lull, the Bronze Age is back and new converts are joining every day. Romance, Westerns, Atlas, Skywald, odd DC and Marvels, and Gold Keys are all in demand. Odd formatted Marvels? Price variants? DC romance? They are all selling above Guide. House of Mystery and House of Secrets continue their climb, especially the 52 and 48-page format issues.

Bronze Age Sales: Green Lantern #88 NM $45; Isis #1 NM- $18; JLA #113 VF $22; Journey into Mystery #1 NM $32; Lois Lane #115 VF/NM $29; Our Army at War #269 FN $38; Ringo Kid #1 NM $38; Secrets of Haunted House #1 VF/NM $22; Sgt. Rock #302 NM- $38; Shazam #1 NM $18; Shazam #8 VF $21; Son of Satan #1 FN $14; Supernatural Thrillers #1 VF $24 Tower of Shadows #1 (KS), NM+ $28.

As Internet grading and sales continue to sort themselves out (and eBay continues to baffle and amaze), price results are all over the board. Low prices for high price books, high prices for low price books, and the game is still going full steam ahead! ■

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MARKET REPORTS

Continued from page 75

ing to the 1940's superhero or the '50s and '60s baby boomer era. A fantastic Australian Superman Kit from a Melbourne newspaper appeared on the Internet and sold for over $2,800! It appears that the old opinion that foreign items are of less value than their U.S. counterparts may finally be changing.

Platinum Age Sales: Buster Brown Drawing Book FA $51

Golden Age Sales: All American #80 FR $46; All Select #1 Cvrless $128; Boy Commandos #17 FR $23; Detective Comics #63 FR $62; Dick Tracy #121 VG $20; Mickey Mouse Mag. V1#3 GD $129, V1#4 GD $129; Mighty Mouse #4 VG $25; Roy Rogers #3 VG $39.

Character Premiums/Toys Sales: Batman 8-pager $72; Capt. Marvel Skull Cap 1945 VG $157; Captain Marvel Jr. 8-pager $36; Happy Hooligan Postcard 1906 VG $12; Jiminy Cricket clicker Circa. 1950 $17.25, Mickey Mouse Child's Sweater Circa. 1950s $30.; Minnie Mouse Mask circa 1930s $31; Star Wars POTF Jawa mint in package $68; Star Wars POTF Warok mint in package $38; Straight Arrow Gold Nugget Ring (incomplete) $7; Supermen of Am. Membership Button 1948 FN $59; Transformers Megatron MT with box $205; Transformers Grimlock loose with VG box $41; Transformers Swoop loose with VG box $76; Winnie the Pooh: Kanga & Roo Statue $61.

LEE HESTER • LEE'S COMICS INC.
3783 EL CAMINO REAL
PALO ALTO, CA 94306
650•493•3957
lee@lcomics.com

Diversity is where it's at. People are broadening their horizons and trying new things, so I like to carry a little of everything at my stores and at the major shows. You never can predict what treasures people will bring in to my store on any given day! That's one of the great pleasures of this job!

Golden Age: Good material is getting scarce! At the San Diego convention I picked up a publisher's edition of a bound volume of vintage Famous Funnies. It contained ten issues including the first four of Frazetta's eight covers. All were flawless except for slight yellowing. When I showed it around, I found that there were opposing opinions regarding bound volumes. One opinion was that these books are a collection of trimmed, spine-damaged copies that, with some care, could be removed to yield a small stack of FR comics. The other view was that these are one of a kind items that should be enjoyed as a unit. I bought the bound volume for $1,000 and later sold it for $1,200. I feel that this type of book will increase in value in the near future as more people discover them

EC: I still have a few comics left from a high grade, nearly complete EC collection that I have been selling on consignment for the last two years These are nice books and I am surprised that they are not selling at a faster rate. Perhaps the Guide prices are getting a little high for some of these, or it may be the increased availability of Gaines file copies, etc.

Pulps I recently entered the Pulp market when I tripped over an extraordinary collection of white page, high grade books which included many Shadow and Weird Menace titles. I sold all those in rapid fashion, but have not been able to find another collection of that quality. I have been taking some collections on consignment, including a good run of Weird Tales. Pulp collecting is still a small field with a core of fanatical collectors, but, new collectors are starting to get interested

Big Little Books I have noticed an interesting phenomenon here... women love Big Little Books! When I put a display of Big Little Books out at a convention or antique show, women stop to look at them. Many of these women have never seen them before but are somehow drawn to them. Most of these collectors are not interested in comics, but were drawn to these particular books. Why is that? What I try to do is have a selection of Big Littles for $5 each so new readers can try them.

Silver Age: Marvels and DCs are harder to find, but Marvels still sell better for me. The bestseller has always been Amazing Spider-Man #1-100. Kirby Fantastic Four, X-Men, Thor, Avengers are always solid, too. Key issues always sell when we can find them.

On the slow side you'll find Captain America (except the Steranko issues), Sub-Mariner, Sgt Fury and His Howling Commandos (non-Kirby issues), and reprint books such as Marvel Tales and Marvel's Greatest Comics

DC was the leader of the field for years. They were the last to holdout against the onslaught of the Marvel juggernaught. Until the early '70s

DC comics looked the way most comics had looked for 40 years; wholesome, with simple stories aimed at kids. The Superman and Batman titles remain evergreen. We can't get them in fast enough to satisfy the demand.

Hawkman, Atom and Green Lantern aren't doing as well. I don't know why, since they are great books. Nice Showcases fly when we can get them. I also wish I could score a bunch of DC horror titles such as House Of Mystery and House of Secrets. These are really tough to find! Many people are discovering the great art and stories in these titles

And, of course, there is a huge following for DC Giants such as 80-page Giant, or DC 100-page Super-Spectacular. These get cherry picked every time we put some out. And we never get enough war titles such as Our Army at War, and Star Spangled War Stories either.

Warrens: Warrens have been underrated for years. People are starting to appreciate how really fine these magazines are. In demand are early issues of Eerie, Creepy and Vampirella. They feature great stories by Archie Goodwin and art by the likes of Ditko, Wood, Crandall, and Adams. Later on, the art roster changed, and many foreign artists were used as well. Their artwork is great in its own right, but collectors don't seem as thrilled by it. At the same time, however new artists such as Wrightson, Corbin, and Jones came forth to enliven many issues with their contributions. If you are a fan of great comic art, I urge you to check out the Warren magazines!

Classics Illustrated: These continue to sell well for us... to a wide range of individuals ranging from fanatical high grade completists to school teachers and parents who are getting them for their children. I have a policy with my Classics that I would like to share with you. I charge Guide, but implement a minimum price of $5 for GD condition copies, and $3 for FR condition copies. This upsets some of the collectors who see the prices for some of these to be as little as $1 in the Guide. In fact, if you look in the Guide, you will see that most of the printings published after 1963 are only worth $1 in GD condition. The reason I have this policy is that I am selling these books for their literary value. In charging this minimum, I am able to offer more money when I buy and keep a better stock. Despite these minimum prices, as I write this, we have less than 20 Classics left in stock out of over 150 in the run, and many customers still looking for specific issues that we don't have. I am going to try a similar minimum price policy on some other items that many people are always looking for, and we seldom have. Archie, MAD Magazine, and Little LuLu come to mind

Market Outlook: Golden Age and Silver Age have continued to appreciate over the years with no signs of ever cooling off. Occasionally people ask me what I would do if the market for old comics completely crashed. I tell them that I would love it! If this ever happened, I would be stockpiling vintage comics for a song! "Here you go, I'll give you two bucks each for that run of Golden Age Batman and Captain Marvel Adventures!"

But don't hold your breath waiting for this scenario to occur. The reality is that more and more people are competing for an ever-diminishing supply of vintage comics. That will continue to drive the prices up. If you are a dealer, give your customers good honest service and fair prices.

Opinions expressed in CBM Market Reports are solely those of the individual dealers and collectors who contribute them. Seasoned hobbyists are acutely aware that prices vary based on geographic location, time of year, and a number of other marketplace factors.

NAIMAN REPORT CONT. FROM PG.70

Jack Kirby's pencil?

books of the late '60s and early '70s. **Jamie Newbold of Southern California Comics reports,"While my sale of $1 and $2 books at San Diego was overwhelmingly successful... the Undergrounds were surprisingly slow. However, a few days after the show a customer brought in a long box of Undergrounds which we purchased. I put them on the Internet and I was flabbergasted at the HUGE response we've had. I can't put them on there fast enough! Most of the books were in VF condition or better.**

Sales included: Cleopatra (mini) $21; Collected Cheech Wizard (1st) $5; Comix Trip (anthology 1st) $17.25; Freak Brothers #1 (pink paper ed.) $56.50; Mickey Rat #1 (1st) $43; Moonchild #1 (1st) $20.50, #2 (1st) $21.50; Zap #0 (2nd) $10.50, #4 (2nd) $12,#5 (1st), #6 (1st) $8.50, #7 (mini) $58.50.

Other Underground sales: El Perfecto Comics #1 (2nd print) $21.50; Fat Freddy's Comics & Stories #1 $15.50; Motor City #1 (4th) $9.99; Mr. Natural #2 (2nd printing) $11.50; Snatch #3 $20.50; Zap # 2 $18.50, #4 $53.

Dealers are quick to point out that the lack of an up-to-date price guide for Undergrounds enables buyers a great opportunity to pick up some great material without the overinflated pressures and broad brush valuation speculations that a price guide might bring to the table. Don't be surprised, however, to see a competing price guide next year that will have comprehensive listings and pricing on undergrounds, pulps, fanzines, and original art. Will this new price guide put pressures on the OPG to list certain underground books? Collectors will be watching....

Specialized genre-based comic book price guides will be easy to produce given the state of computer databases and the ease with which any journeyman computer-savvy comic book fan could put one together. Coupled with an Internet website, how easy would it be to offer monthly updates (for a small fee) that could be downloaded from a site? Unless drastic changes are made on how information is gathered and used by the price guides, we may soon see some of the time honored books of information left behind in a electronic "cloud of dust." ■

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Continued from page 11

Overstreet Price Guide and the Gerber Guide. It was nowhere to be found.

The art style definitely resembles many of the early 1950's Fox books. I checked Blazing Comics #5 in the Price Guide and the listing said that many different insides had been stapled into leftover covers. Feature Stories Magazine wasn't one of the books listed in the description of books found inside Blazing Comics #5 covers. As any collector of the Enwil/Rural Home comics can attest, there are many different insides stapled to Rural Home books' covers.

For instance, the very next week I was shopping at my local comic shop and the owner sold me a Red Circle Comics #4 with a Dorothy Lamour interior.

I am anxious to see how many of these books exist and to find out if this issue of Blazing Comics #5 with its Feature Stories Magazine inside is indeed the missing book. Does any CBM reader have a Fox romance book with "The Iroquois Trail" as the opener? It would be great, for the sake of documentation, to finally nail this one down.

Michael Browning, West Virginia
Tel: (304) 426-6369

Superman doll?

Recently I had the good fortune to purchase a wood-jointed/composition Superman doll put out by Ideal Toys in the late 1930s or early 1940s. I have a couple of questions for your learned readers regarding the piece:

1. What year did Ideal Toys release the wood-jointed Superman doll? Several sources, including Danny Fuchs and Jim Hambrick, refer to the doll as the very first Superman toy, circa 1939. Others, such as Ted Hake and The Collectors Guide To Ideal Dolls, date the piece from 1940. Ted Hake agrees that it is the very first solo figure toy of Superman, but he wouldn't commit to it being the first Superman toy. The Collectors Guide To Ideal Dolls actually dates the Superman doll from 1940 to 1945. So what is the correct date of issue?

2. There are two versions of the "S" emblem on Superman's chest, a "skinny" emblem and a "fat" emblem. Did one appear before the other or were they released at the same time?

3. According to Danny Fuchs, the doll's cape was made from different materials such as felt, cloth, plastic, and leather. Which material is, thought by collectors of this piece to be preferred and superior?

Is there any CBMer that can provide definitive information? Is it really the very first Superman toy? This doll is an extremely important part of the history of the character of Superman and I'd love to see some documentation on it... faster than a speeding bullet!

Regarding The Great Comic Book Heroes by Jules Feiffer (1965-Bonanza Books Publ.)... Long before DC Comics' 1974 Famous First Edition series reprinted their greatest superheroes origins, Jules Feiffer compiled them all including the origins of Captain America, Plastic Man, and Captain Marvel in his 1965 hardcover.

The book is 190 pages long with only 47 of those pages dedicated to text. The remainder are full-color reprintings from the following comic books: Superman #1 (Origin of Superman), Superman #3, Batman #1 (Origin of Batman and The Joker), Flash Comics #1 (Origin of The Flash), Flash Comics #5, All-American Comics #16 (Origin of Green Lantern), All-Star Comics #1, Wonder Woman #2, Police Comics #1 (Origin of Plastic Man), Marvel Mystery Comics #7, Captain America Comics #1 (Origin of Captain America), Whiz Comics #2 (#1, Origin of Captain Marvel).

Perhaps because of continuing litigation between Fawcett Comics and DC Comics at the time, only page 5 from Whiz Comics #2 (#1), showing the origin of Captain Marvel, was reprinted.

The book is very important because it was the very first time in comic book history that those classic origin stories were reprinted.The wonderful stories, and Superman in full-color flight on the cover of the dust jacket, made for a great piece of buried treasure in the comic book timeline.

John Mlachnik, Minnesota

Gerber sticker sets

CBM is one of the few comics-related mags that I pick up. I'm looking forward to the coming Gerber sticker sets (CBM #74, 75, and CBM Special Edition #3).

CBM always has an excellent perspective on the past, along with tremendous respect for it. Furthermore, CBM doesn't exhibit an air of snobbiness about the material it's covering, your mag never forgets the sense of wonder and fun associated with comics. After all, isn't that why all of us got hooked?

Many thanks for producing such a high quality magazine, and pardon the ramblings of someone who still loves his comics!

David Stewart, via E-mail

Dell/Gold Key 3 Stooges

Can any CBM reader tell me the names of the Dell/Gold Key writers and artists who worked on the Three Stooges comic book series published from 1959-1971? The styles imply two main artists: one on the earlier Dell issues, the second on the Gold Key issues. I suspect a third artist was used occasionally, particularly on The Three Stooges Meet Hercules adaption issue, could it be Pete Costanza?

As for who the writers were, I have no clue whatsoever. Many people say Norman Maurer, but that's not the answer. Norm had no creative contribution to this particular series. Thanks in advance to any comic scholars who can inform the curiosity of this Stooges' fan.

A CBM reader, via E-mail

That should lower the value!

Just got back from two days of extravaganza at the four-day San Diego ComiCon. After being overseas for the last decade, away from the comic book "mainstream," I was pleasantly surprised to find that not a whole lot had changed, except maybe all the toy dealers and other comic-related things at the convention.

So with my lovely wife, Michele, a Felix the Cat fan, my 13-year-old son, Jesse, and a 10-year-old nephew, Grant, we headed out to the great unknown. We had a great time! I filled some holes in my Silver and Bronze Age Batman titles. Michele found some Olivia cards. The boys got some deals and the opportunity to see more comics than they could possibly imagine. Oh, and lest I forget, Grant found his elusive "Bane" action figure for $4!

The high point of the trip was meeting Jerry Robinson. I own exactly one Golden Age comic, FN- copy of Detective Comics #73 with a super Scarecrow cover. A good friend of mine sold it to me last year for the right price. I just cannot afford the Golden Age very much. So imagine my surprise when I checked the guest list and found Jerry Robinson's name on the roster. I managed to locate Mr. Robinson, spoke for a while about the cover of Detective #73 and then he signed the issue for me and said, "That should lower the value!"

Jerry Robinson is a well-spoken man who is very humorous, and it was enjoyable to talk with him. Now I have something even more exciting than a Detective #73: I have a signed copy by one of comics' great artists which makes it worth a million to me!

We also met my favorite artist, Neal Adams. I wandered by the Continuity booth and there he was. Being unprepared, I ran off to look for some Adams' Batmans I needed anyway, to have them signed. I left the others in our group standing at the booth to fend for themselves and returned about ten minutes later to find that Adams had gone to do an interview. I was greeted by my wife grinning from ear to ear. It seems that my wife had told Adams that I had gone to find some Batmans for him to sign, and that I was his biggest fan, etc. Adams apparently replied "Your husband isn't one of those crazy fans, is he?" Yes, they told him, I was.

Anyway, I ran into Adams later and got my Batmans signed. We spoke about the panel he had been on the day before. The panel discussed his new sketchbook, and all the Adams folklore through the years. We had a good laugh, "So you're not so crazy after all, Ronn," he quipped.

My son is a big X-Men fan, especially the early X-Men. He likes the original group. So we went out looking for good, solid, low grade X-Men for his collection and he found a #63 with Magneto. Jesse was so taken by Adams that he bought the #63 issue and off we returned to the Continuity booth to get the issue signed. Again, Adams was great. He said, "Not only will I sign this but I will tell you why I drew for this title." He told us the story, and we were riveted. It was great to have an opportunity with my son and a comic industry icon for a few moment of storytelling and laughter. Kudos to Adams for giving as much to the new generation of collectors as he did to my generation.

I was sorry not to find Gary Carter at the Con… well, maybe next year. But my family and I had a great time. I did finally met Richard Muchin of Tomorrow's Treasures. He has been my lifeline for comics I could not find when I was stationed overseas in Hawaii or Guam. Everyone I met and talked to at the convention was great. All in all we really enjoyed the 1999 San Diego Comic Convention. The experience was at least a "VF."

Thanks a lot, Gary. I'll write again soon.

Ronn E. Sutton, California

Archie's first cover

For quite some time now I have been bothered by a glaring error in the Overstreet Guide which I would like to see corrected. Archie's first cover appearance is on Jackpot #4 (1941), NOT on Pep #36 as stated in the Guide. I don't know how this could have been missed, but it's there for all to see.

The art in Jackpot #4 is wonderful and is historical not only for the first cover appearance but for Archie's second appearance ever. I have also heard that it was beaten out by one week by Pep #22 for the first appearance.

I wonder if other CBM readers agree or disagree with this. If they have info to the contrary, please write in this information.

Keep up the great work! I am a loyal reader of your magazine. Take care.

P.S. I almost have every issue of your magazine. Just a few more to get!

Joseph Shafir, via E-mail

Thanks to everyone who took the time to write… we really enjoy your letters! Please note that letters maybe edited for content and space. Please send your correspondence to: CBM's Marketplace Mail, P.O. Box 180700, Coronado, CA 92178 or FAX (619) 437-1993 E-mail us at: cbm@gemstonepub.com

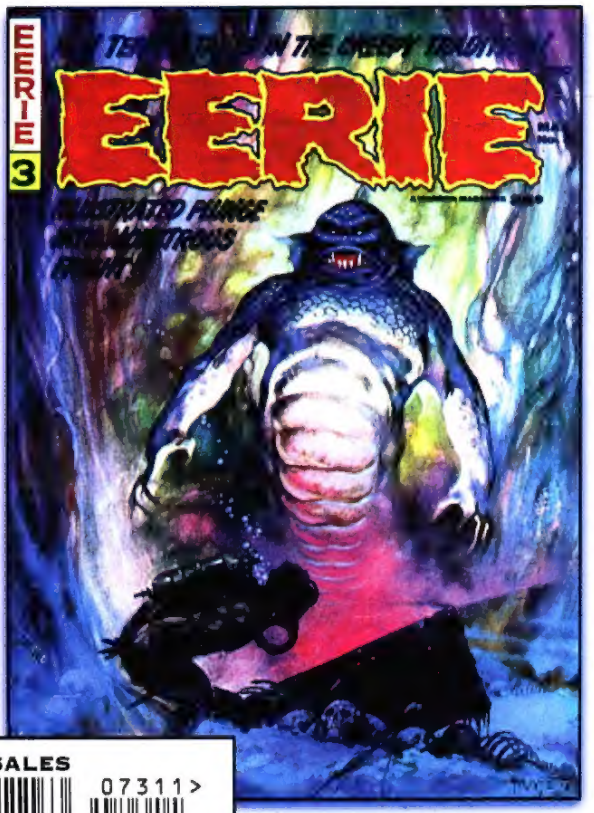
Graphic Novel No. 1

See article by Jeff Gelb (page 54)

Measuring 5¼" by 7⅞" and carrying a 25¢ cover price, the almost-unknown and extremely rare squarebound 128-page graphic novel **It Rhymes With Lust** (1950) was written by comic legend Arnold Drake and novelist Les Waller. This tome is sought after by both collectors of pre-Code crime/romance and scarce squarebounds, and sells for many multiples of Guide. It has become something of a legend among art book collectors because it contains more than 100 pages of Matt Baker art and because of its impossible-to-find status. Additionally, historians marvel at the fact that a graphic novel could have been published more than 30 years before the "graphic novel era" of the 1980s.

Creepy #1 (Win 1964) featured a light-hearted Jack Davis cover but the contents were the first comic book horror in a decade

Fabulous Frank Frazetta leads off the first "real" issue of Eerie (#2, Mar 1966) with one of his classic paintings



The real treasure on the cover of Eerie #3 (May 1966) is Frazetta's ability to invest scenes with incredible atmosphere, even underwater

The T-Rex on the cover of Eerie #5 (Sep 1966) make it easy to see why Frazetta's art caused such a fandom-furor during the '60s

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